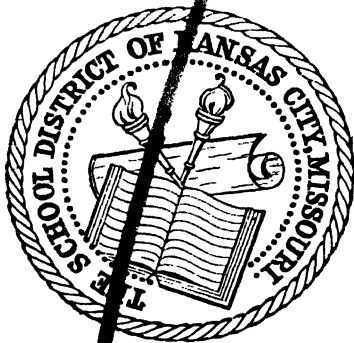


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*The* PENGUIN BOOK *of*  
SONNETS



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SONNETS

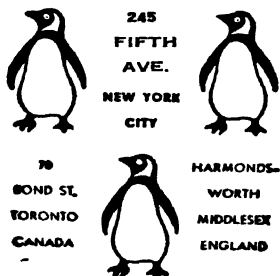
Edited by  
CARL WITHERS



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# Foreword to Penguin Book Readers

A GLANCE at the table of contents will show that this book is really three books in one: (1) the Sonnets of William Shakespeare; (2) the sonnet sequence of Edmund Spenser entitled "Amoretti," with its great concluding marriage hymn "Epithalamion"; and (3) a representative collection of sonnets by poets from all the periods of English and American literature when good sonnets were written, including the present.

Shakespeare's great sonnets and Spenser's "Amoretti" are printed in full because they are the finest sonnet sequences in our language.

The third section of the book illustrates, as far as space and the editor's taste permit, by splendid or representative poems by many authors, the various formal and thematic changes that have been rung on the sonnet form since Wyatt and Surrey borrowed it from the Continent and wrote the first sonnets to be printed in English. These appeared in 1557.

Wyatt and Surrey established the two main forms which came to be considered "correct" for sonnets in English. The first of these is called the Petrarchan or "Italian" sonnet. In translating many of the famous sonnets of Petrarch, Wyatt followed Petrarch's favorite rhyming scheme for the *octet*, or first eight lines of the sonnet, and a less favorite scheme for rhyming the last six lines, or *sestet*. The rhyme scheme of the Petrarchan sonnet as traditionally written by English poets is a b b a a b b a, plus a sestet including two or three rhymes and sometimes ending in a couplet. Surrey "anglicized" the sonnet in two ways: his adaptation of foreign sonnets suggested English themes more than outright translations, and his preference for alternate rhymes (rather than the a b b a . . . system) originated what we now call the

## viii      *Foreword to Penguin Book Readers*

"English" type of sonnet. Surrey's rhyme scheme went a b a b a b a b a b c c.

Shakespeare's variation of this scheme, by which each quatrain before the final couplet begins with new rhymes (a b a b c d c d e f e f g g) has come to be most typical for sonnets in the English form. Spenser's charming and more closely-knit variation of the scheme, in which the first line of each new quatrain borrows the rhyme of the last preceding rhyme-word (a b a b b c b c c d c d e e) has been little imitated. Still another variation of the English sonnet has been the use of the same rhyming freedom in the sestet as in the sestet of the Petrarchan sonnet. Most excellent sonneteers since Elizabeth's day have written sonnets in both the English and the Petrarchan form, though the latter has been the more popular.

Those who wish to define sonnets very accurately say that sonnets are poems of fourteen lines, usually of ten syllables each, following either the English or the Petrarchan rhyme scheme, and expressing a single emotion or impression. The octet is generally expected to arouse a mood which the sestet resolves, and sometimes there are further divisions of the thought into, for example: quatrain, quatrain, quatrain, couplet (or quatrain, quatrain, tercet, tercet).

Critics are sometimes shocked when any of these rules are broken; but art, whenever it is living, is always experimenting with the sacred inherited art forms as well as with the transmitted mores of the communities in which the artists live. That artists must experiment is one reason why both artists and their audiences are sometimes unhappy or uncomfortable. It is however rather curious that "experimentation," which as a single cultural trait has come to be highly valued in science and mechanics, is still popularly undervalued, or unvalued, in the arts and the social sciences.

In selecting sonnets for this book, no great concern has been felt for avoiding heresies, such as Alexandrine endings, hexameter or octosyllabic lines instead of iambic pentameter lines, or unusual rhyme schemes. Such concern would have eliminated too many sonnets by Shakespeare, Spenser, Sidney, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Keats, as well as a number of later sonnets which the editor admired.

Several poems are included that by dictionary definition cannot properly be called sonnets. The reason for including Spenser's "Epithalamion" is obvious: it completes and fulfills the sonnet sequence "Amoretti," and was originally published with it. Landor's unrhymed sonnet has often appeared in sonnet collections. Without Blake's beautiful fourteen line poem, "To the Evening Star," this great poet would not be represented. Bartholomew Griffen's "Fly to Her Heart" is printed not only for its odd charm but as an example of Elizabethan experiments in "like-loose" rhyme (all lines ending with the same word). In "O Sweet Woods," Sir Philip Sidney was experimenting at once with the newly acculturated sonnet form and with Classical quantitative, rather than accented, verse. This magnificent poem suggests a direction English poetry might have taken, but didn't, in all its borrowings.

As for the heresy of printing Spenser in modern spelling, the changes are little greater than those which have customarily been made to modernize Shakespeare's spelling. The real heresy with Elizabethans is pronouncing their words as words are now spoken; it is wonderful that their poetry on modern tongues still makes great music, though different from that heard in the London of Queen Elizabeth.

It is not necessary to summarize here the familiar story of what the sonnet became, in theme and form, in the

hands of such great sonneteers as Donne, Milton, Wordsworth, and Keats. Enough of their sonnets are included to reveal the story to anyone who can hear rhythms, understand poetical ideas, and notice end-rhymes.

It is of course not possible to include enough copyright sonnets by recent and living poets to represent the power and range of each. It was not even possible for the editor to include sonnets by every poet whose work seemed representative. A "one sonnet apiece" policy was therefore followed, as far as permissions funds would permit. If you like the modern sonnets, then go to your library and borrow, or better still, to your bookstore and buy, the books of the poets who are alive and kicking. Many of them have written other sonnets, and all of them have written other poetry. They are poets of your own generation. If the idiom of some of the modern sonnets at first seems "strange" or "difficult" or "unpoetic," remember what some early reviewers angrily said of Keats: he made up words that weren't in the language; he was obscure; and who ever heard of considering such subject matter as suitable for *poetry*?

Thanks are due many friends for counsel, information, and aid of various kinds in compiling this book. Special gratitude is due the poet Oscar Williams, who gave generous time and critical advice; to my friend Maurice J. Valency, who devoted several evenings to the task of helping to select sonnets; and to Walter Pitkin, Jr., of Penguin Books, whose aid on every phase of *The Penguin Book of Sonnets* was great. Since no one adviser, however, saw all sections of the book before its completion, no one but its editor can be blamed for its faults.

C. W.

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THE COMPLETE SONNETS  
OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
(1564-1616)

TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .  
THESE . INSVING . SONNETS .  
M<sup>r</sup> W. H. ALL . HAPPINESSE .  
AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .  
PROMISED  
BY .  
OVR . EVER-LIVING . POET .  
WISHETH .  
THE . WELL-WISHING  
ADVENTVRER . IN .  
SETTING .  
FORTH .  
T. T.



# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## COMPLETE SONNETS

### I

From fairest creatures we desire increase,  
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,  
But as the ripper should by time decease,  
His tender heir might bear his memory:  
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,  
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,  
Making a famine where abundance lies,  
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.  
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament  
And only herald to the gaudy spring,  
Within thine own bud buriest thy content  
And, tender churl, makest waste in niggarding.  
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,  
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow  
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,  
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,  
Will be a tattered weed, of small worth held:  
Then being asked where all thy beauty lies,  
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,  
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,  
Were an ill-eating shame and thriftless praise.  
How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,  
If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine  
Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,'  
Proving his beauty by succession thine!  
This were to be new made when thou art old,  
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

## 3

Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest  
Now is the time that face should form another;  
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,  
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.  
For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb  
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?  
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb  
Of his self-love, to stop posterity?  
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee  
Calls back the lovely April of her prime:  
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,  
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.  
But if thou live, remembered not to be,  
Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend  
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?  
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,  
And being frank, she lends to those are free.  
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse  
The bounteous largess given thee to give?  
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use  
So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?  
For having traffic with thyself alone,  
Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.  
Then how, when nature calls thee to be gone,  
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?  
Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee,  
Which, used, lives th' executor to be.

Those hours that with gentle work did frame  
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,  
Will play the tyrants to the very same  
And that unfair which fairly doth excel:  
For never-resting time leads summer on  
To hideous winter and confounds him there;  
Sap checked with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,  
Beauty o'ersnowed and bareness every where:  
Then, were not summer's distillation left,  
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,  
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,  
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was:  
But flowers distilled, though they with winter meet,  
Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

*Leese, lose*

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface  
In thee thy summer, ere thou be distilled:  
Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place  
With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-killed.  
That use is not forbidden usury,  
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;  
That's for thyself to breed another thee,  
Or ten times happier, be it ten for one;  
Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,  
If ten of thine ten times refigured thee:  
Then what could death do, if thou shouldst depart,  
Leaving thee living in posterity?  
Be not self-willed, for thou art much too fair  
To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

Lo, in the orient when the gracious light  
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye  
Doth homage to his new appearing sight,  
Serving with looks his sacred majesty;  
And having climb'd the steep up heavenly hill,  
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,  
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,  
Attending on his golden pilgrimage;  
But when from highmost pitch, with weary car  
Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day,  
The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are  
From his low tract, and look another way:  
So thou, thyself out-going in thy noon,  
Unlooked on diest, unless thou get a son.

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?  
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.  
Why lovest thou that which thou receivest not gladly,  
Or else receivest with pleasure thine annoy?  
If the true concord of well tunèd sounds,  
By unions married, do offend thine ear  
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds  
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.  
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,  
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;  
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,  
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:  
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,  
Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye  
That thou consumest thyself in single life?  
Ah! if thou issueless shalt hap to die,  
The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife;  
The world will be thy widow, and still weep  
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,  
When every private widow well may keep  
By children's eyes her husband's shape in mind.  
Look, what an unthrift in the world doth spend  
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;  
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,  
And kept unused, the user so destroys it:  
No love toward others in that bosom sits  
That on himself such murderous shame commits.  
*makeless, mateless*

## 10

For shame deny that thou bear'st love to any,  
Who for thyself art so unprovident:  
Grant if thou wilt, thou art beloved of many,  
But that thou none lov'st is most evident;  
For thou art so possessed with murderous hate  
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,  
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate  
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.  
O change thy thought, that I may change my mind!  
Shall hate be fairer lodged than gentle love?  
Be, as thy presence is, gracious and kind,  
Or to thyself at least kind-hearted prove:  
Make thee another self, for love of me,  
That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

## 11

As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st  
In one of thine, from that which thou departest;  
And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st  
Thou mayst call thine when thou from youth convertest.  
Herein lives wisdom, beauty and increase;  
Without this, folly, age and cold decay:  
If all were minded so, the times should cease  
And threescore year would make the world away.  
Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,  
Harsh, featureless and rude, barrenly perish:  
Look, whom she best endowed she gave the more;  
Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish:  
She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby  
Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.

When I do count the clock that tells the time,  
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;  
When I behold the violet past prime,  
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;  
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,  
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,  
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,  
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,  
Then of thy beauty do I question make,  
That thou among the wastes of time must go,  
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake  
And die as fast as they see others grow;  
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence  
Save breed to brave him when he takes thee hence.

O that you were yourself! but, love, you are  
No longer yours than you yourself here live:  
Against this coming end you should prepare,  
And your sweet semblance to some other give.  
So should that beauty which you hold in lease  
Find no determination; then you were  
Yourself again, after yourself's decease,  
When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.  
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,  
Which husbandry in honor might uphold  
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day  
And barren rage of death's eternal cold?  
O, none but unthrifths; dear my love, you know  
You had a father; let your son say so.

## 14

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck;  
And yet methinks I have astronomy,  
But not to tell of good or evil luck,  
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;  
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,  
Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,  
Or say with princes if it shall go well,  
By oft predict that I in heaven find:  
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,  
And constant stars, in them I read such art,  
As truth and beauty shall together thrive,  
If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert;  
Or else of thee this I prognosticate:  
Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

## 15

When I consider every thing that grows  
Holds in perfection but a little moment,  
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows  
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;  
When I perceive that men as plants increase,  
Cheered and checked even by the self-same sky,  
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,  
And wear their brave state out of memory;  
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay  
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,  
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,  
To change your day of youth to sullied night;  
And all in war with Time for love of you,  
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

## 16

But wherefore do not you a mightier way  
Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time?  
And fortify yourself in your decay  
With means more blessed than my barren rhyme?  
Now stand you on the top of happy hours,  
And many maiden gardens, yet unset,  
With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers  
Much liker than your painted counterfeit:  
So should the lines of life that life repair,  
Which this, Time's pencil, or my pupil pen,  
Neither in inward worth nor outward fair,  
Can make you live yourself in eyes of men.  
    To give away yourself keeps yourself still;  
    And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill.

## 17

Who will believe my verse in time to come,  
If it were filled with your most high deserts?  
Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb  
Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.  
If I could write the beauty of your eyes  
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,  
The age to come would say 'This poet lies;  
Such heavenly touches ne'er touched earthly faces.'  
So should my papers, yellowed with their age,  
Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue,  
And your true rights be termed a poet's rage  
And stretched metre of an antique song:  
    But were some child of yours alive that time,  
    You should live twice, in it and in my rhyme.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:  
    So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
    So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,  
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;  
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,  
And burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood;  
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,  
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,  
To the wide world and all her fading sweets;  
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:  
O carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,  
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;  
Him in thy course untainted do allow  
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.  
    Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,  
    My love shall in my verse ever live young.

## 20

A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted  
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;  
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted  
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;  
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,  
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;  
A man in hue all hues in his controlling,  
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.  
And for a woman wert thou first created;  
Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,  
And by addition me of thee defeated,  
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.  
But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,  
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

## 21

So is it not with me as with that Muse  
Stirred by a painted beauty to his verse,  
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use  
And every fair with his fair doth rehearse,  
Making a couplement of proud compare,  
With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,  
With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare  
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.  
O let me true in love but truly write,  
And then believe me, my love is as fair  
As any mother's child, though not so bright  
As those gold candles fixed in heaven's air:  
Let them say more that like of hearsay well;  
I will not praise that purpose not to sell.

## 22

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,  
So long as youth and thou are of one date;  
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,  
Then look I death my days should expiate.  
For all that beauty that doth cover thee  
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,  
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me;  
How can I then be elder than thou art?  
O therefore, love, be of thyself so wary  
As I, not for myself, but for thee will;  
Bearing thy heart which I will keep so chary  
As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.  
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain;  
Thou gavest me thine, not to give back again.

## 23

As an imperfect actor on the stage,  
Who with his fear is put besides his part,  
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,  
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;  
So I for fear of trust forget to say  
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,  
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,  
O'ercharged with burthen of mine own love's might:  
O let my books be then the eloquence  
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast;  
Who plead for love, and look for recompense,  
More than that tongue that more hath more expressed.  
O learn to read what silent love hath writ:  
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

## 24

Mine eye hath played the painter and hath steeled  
Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;  
My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,  
And perspective it is best painter's art.  
For through the painter must you see his skill,  
To find where your true image pictured lies;  
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,  
That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.  
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done:  
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me  
Are windows to my breast, where-through the sun  
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;  
Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,  
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

## 25

Let those who are in favor with their stars  
Of public honor and proud titles boast,  
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars  
Unlooked for joy in that I honor most.  
Great princes' favorites their fair leaves spread.  
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,  
And in themselves their pride lies buried,  
For at a frown they in their glory die.  
The painful warrior famoused for fight,  
After a thousand victories once foiled  
Is from the book of honor razèd quite,  
And all the rest forgot for which he toiled:  
Then happy I, that love and am beloved  
Where I may not remove nor be removed.

## 26

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage  
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,  
To thee I send this written ambassage,  
To witness duty, not to show my wit:  
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine  
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it,  
But that I hope some good conceit of thine  
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it;  
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,  
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,  
And puts apparel on my tattered loving,  
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:  
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee:  
Till then not show my head where thou mayst prove  
me.

## 27

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,  
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;  
But then begins a journey in my head,  
To work my mind, when body's work 's expired:  
For then my thoughts, from far where I abide,  
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,  
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,  
Looking on darkness which the blind do see:  
Save that my soul's imaginary sight  
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,  
Which like a jewel hung in ghastly night,  
Make black night beauteous and her old face new.  
Lo thus by day my limbs, by night my mind,  
For thee and for myself no quiet find.

28

How can I then return in happy plight,  
That am debarred the benefit of rest?  
When day's oppression is not eased by night,  
But day by night, and night by day, oppressed?  
And each, though enemies to either's reign,  
Do in consent shake hands to torture me;  
The one by toil, the other to complain  
How far I toil, still farther off from thee.  
I tell the day, to please him thou art bright,  
And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven  
So flatter I the swart-complexioned night;  
When sparkling stars twire not thou gild'st the even.  
But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,  
And night doth nightly make grief's strength seem  
stronger.

29

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,  
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,  
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,  
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least;  
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
Like to the lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings  
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.  
*twire, gleam*

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past,  
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:  
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,  
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,  
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight:  
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er  
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,  
Which I new pay as if not paid before.  
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts,  
Which I by lacking have supposed dead;  
And there reigns love, and all love's loving parts,  
And all those friends which I thought buried.  
How many a holy and obsequious tear  
Hath dear religious love stol'n from mine eye,  
As interest of the dead, which now appear  
But things removed that hidden in thee lie!  
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live  
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,  
Who all their parts of me to thee did give:  
That due of many now is thine alone:  
Their images I loved I view in thee,  
And thou (all they) hast all the all of me.

## 32

If thou survive my well-contented day  
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,  
And shalt by fortune once more re-survey  
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,  
Compare them with the bettering of the time,  
And though they be outstripped by every pen,  
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme  
Exceeded by the height of happier men.  
O, then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:  
'Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,  
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,  
To march in ranks of better equipage:  
But since he died, and poets better prove,  
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love.'

## 33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,  
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:  
Even so my sun one early morn did shine  
With all-triumphant splendor on my brow;  
But, out, alack! he was but one hour mine,  
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.  
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;  
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

## 34

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,  
And make me travel forth without my cloak,  
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,  
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?  
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,  
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,  
For no man well of such a salve can speak  
That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace:  
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief;  
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss:  
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief  
To him that bears the strong offence's cross.  
Ah, but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,  
And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.

## 35

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done:  
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;  
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,  
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.  
All men make faults, and even I in this,  
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,  
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,  
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are;  
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense—  
Thy adverse party is thy advocate—  
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence:  
Such civil war is in my love and hate,  
That I an accessory needs must be  
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

## 36

Let me confess that we two must be twain,  
Although our undivided loves are one:  
So shall those blots that do with me remain,  
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.  
In our two loves there is but one respect,  
Though in our lives a separable spite,  
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,  
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.  
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,  
Lest my bewailèd guilt should do thee shame,  
Nor thou with public kindness honor me,  
Unless thou take that honor from thy name:  
    But do not so; I love thee in such sort,  
    As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

## 37

As a decrepit father takes delight  
To see his active child do deeds of youth,  
So I, made lame by Fortune's dearest spite,  
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth;  
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,  
Or any of these all, or all, or more,  
Entitled in thy parts do crownèd sit,  
I make my love engrafted to this store:  
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised,  
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give  
That I in thy abundance am sufficed  
And by a part of all thy glory live.  
    Look what is best that best I wish in thee:  
    This wish I have, then ten times happy me.

## 38

How can my Muse want subject to invent  
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse  
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent  
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?  
O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me  
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight;  
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,  
When thou thyself dost give invention light?  
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth  
Than those old nine which rhymers invoke;  
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth  
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.

If my slight Muse do please these curious days  
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

## 39

O how thy worth with manners may I sing,  
When thou art all the better part of me?  
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?  
And what is 't but mine own when I praise thee?  
Even for this let us divided live,  
And our dear love lose name of single one,  
That by this separation I may give  
That due to thee which thou deservest alone.  
O absence, what a torment wouldst thou prove,  
Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave  
To entertain the time with thoughts of love,  
Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive,  
And that thou teachest how to make one twain,  
By praising him here who doth hence remain!

## 40

Take all my loves, my love, yea take them all;  
What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?  
No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call;  
All mine was thine before thou hadst this more.  
Then if for my love thou my love receivest,  
I cannot blame thee for my love thou usest;  
But yet be blamed, if thou thyself deceivest  
By wilful taste of what thyself refusest.  
I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,  
Although thou steal thee all my poverty;  
And yet, love knows, it is a greater grief  
To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury.  
Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,  
Kill me with spies, yet we must not be foes.

## 41

Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits,  
When I am sometime absent from thy heart,  
Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,  
For still temptation follows where thou art.  
Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,  
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed;  
And when a woman woos, what woman's son  
Will sourly leave her till she hath prevailed?  
Ay me, but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,  
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,  
Who lead thee in their riot even there  
Where thou art forced to break a twofold truth,  
Hers by thy beauty tempting her to thee,  
Thine by thy beauty being false to me.

## 42

That thou hast her it is not all my grief,  
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly;  
That she hath thee is of my wailing chief,  
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.  
Loving offenders thus I will excuse ye:  
Thou dost love her because thou know'st I love her;  
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,  
Suffering my friend for my sake to approve her.  
If I lose thee my loss is my love's gain,  
And losing her my friend hath found that loss;  
Both find each other and I lose both twain,  
And both for my sake lay on me this cross:  
    But here 's the joy: my friend and I are one;  
    Sweet flattery, then she loves but me alone.

## 43

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,  
For all the day they view things unrespected;  
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,  
And, darkly bright, are bright in dark directed.  
Then thou whose shadow shadows doth make bright,  
How would thy shadow's form form happy show  
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,  
When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so?  
How would (I say) mine eyes be blessed made  
By looking on thee in the living day,  
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade  
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay?  
    All days are nights to see till I see thee,  
    And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.

## 44

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,  
Injurious distance should not stop my way,  
For then despite of space I would be brought,  
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.  
No matter then although my foot did stand  
Upon the farthest earth removed from thee;  
For nimble thought can jump both sea and land,  
As soon as think the place where he would be.  
But, ah, thought kills me, that I am not thought,  
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,  
But that so much of earth and water wrought,  
I must attend time's leisure with my moan;  
    Receiving nought by elements so slow  
    But heavy tears, badges of either's woe.

## 45

The other two, slight air and purging fire,  
Are both with thee, wherever I abide;  
The first my thought, the other my desire,  
These present absent with swift motion slide.  
For when these quicker elements are gone  
In tender embassy of love to thee,  
My life, being made of four, with two alone  
Sinks down to death, oppressed with melancholy;  
Until life's composition be recured  
By those swift messengers returned from thee,  
Who even but now come back again, assured  
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me:  
    This told, I joy, but then no longer glad,  
    I send them back again, and straight grow sad.

## 46

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war,  
How to divide the conquest of thy sight;  
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,  
My heart mine eye the freedom of that right;  
My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie,  
(A closet never pierced with crystal eyes),  
But the defendant doth that plea deny,  
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.  
To 'cide this title is impannellèd  
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart;  
And by their verdict is determinèd  
The clear eye's moiety and the dear heart's part:  
As thus, mine eye's due is thine outward part,  
And my heart's right thine inward love of heart.

## 47

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,  
And each doth good turns now unto the other:  
When that mine eye is famished for a look,  
Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,  
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast  
And to the painted banquet bids my heart;  
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest  
And in his thoughts of love doth share a part:  
So either by thy picture or my love,  
Thyself away art present still with me;  
For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,  
And I am still with them and they with thee;  
Or if they sleep, thy picture in my sight  
Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight.

## 48

How careful was I, when I took my way,  
Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,  
That to my use it might unused stay  
From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust!  
But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,  
Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,  
Thou best of dearest, and mine only care,  
Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.  
Thee have I not locked up in any chest,  
Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,  
Within the gentle closure of my breast,  
From whence at pleasure thou mayst come and part,  
And even thence thou wilt be stolen, I fear,  
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

## 49

Against that time (if ever that time come)  
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,  
When as thy love hath cast his utmost sum,  
Called to that audit by advised respects;  
Against that time when thou shalt strangely pass,  
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye,  
When love, converted from the thing it was,  
Shall reasons find of settled gravity;  
Against that time do I ensconce me here  
Within the knowledge of mine own desert,  
And this my hand against myself uprear,  
To guard the lawful reasons on thy part:  
To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,  
Since why to love I can allege no cause.

How heavy do I journey on the way,  
When what I seek (my weary travel's end)  
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,  
'Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend.'  
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,  
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,  
As if by some instinct the wretch did know  
His rider loved not speed, being made from thee:  
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on  
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,  
Which heavily he answers with a groan,  
More sharp to me than spurring to his side;  
For that same groan doth put this in my mind;  
My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.

Thus can my love excuse the slow offence  
Of my dull bearer when from thee I speed:  
From where thou art why should I haste me thence?  
Till I return, of posting is no need.  
O, what excuse will my poor beast then find,  
When swift extremity can seem but slow?  
Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind,  
In wingèd speed no motion shall I know:  
Then can no horse with my desire keep pace;  
Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made,  
Shall neigh, no dull flesh in his fiery race;  
But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade;  
Since from thee going he went wilful slow,  
Towards thee I'll run and give him leave to go.

## 52

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key  
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,  
The which he will not every hour survey,  
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.  
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,  
Since seldom coming in the long year set,  
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,  
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.  
So is the time that keeps you as my chest,  
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,  
To make some special instant special blest,  
By new unfolding his imprisoned pride,  
Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,  
Being had to triumph, being lacked to hope.

## 53

What is your substance, whereof are you made,  
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?  
Since every one hath, every one, one shade,  
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.  
Describe Adonis and the counterfeit  
Is poorly imitated after you;  
On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,  
And you in Grecian tires are painted new:  
Speak of the spring and foison of the year,  
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,  
The other as your bounty doth appear,  
And you in every blessed shape we know.  
In all external grace you have some part,  
But you like none, none you for constant heart.

## 54

O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem  
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give.  
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem  
For that sweet odor which doth in it live.  
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye  
As the perfumèd tincture of the roses,  
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly  
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:  
But for their virtue only is their show,  
They live unwooded and unrespected fade;  
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;  
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odors made:  
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,  
When that shall fade, my verse distills your truth.

## 55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments  
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme,  
But you shall shine more bright in these contents  
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.  
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,  
And broils root out the work of masonry,  
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn  
The living record of your memory.  
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity  
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room  
Even in the eyes of all posterity  
That wear this world out to the ending doom.  
So till the judgment that yourself arise,  
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

## 56

Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said  
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,  
Which but to-day by feeding is allayed,  
Tomorrow sharpened in his former might:  
So, love, be thou; although to-day thou fill  
Thy hungry eyes even till they wink with fulness,  
Tomorrow see again, and do not kill  
The spirit of love with a perpetual dulness.  
Let this sad interim like the ocean be  
Which parts the shore, where two contracted new  
Come daily to the banks, that when they see  
Return of love, more blest may be the view;  
Or call it winter, which being full of care,  
Makes summer's welcome thrice more wished, **more**  
rare.

## 57

Being your slave, what should I do but tend  
Upon the hours and times of your desire?  
I have no precious time at all to spend,  
Nor services to do till you require.  
Nor dare I chide the world without end hour  
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,  
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour  
When you have bid your servant once adieu.  
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought  
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,  
But like a sad slave stay and think of nought  
Save where you are how happy you make those.  
So true a fool is love that in your Will,  
(Though you do any thing), he thinks no ill.

## 58

What god forbid, that made me first your slave,  
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,  
Or at your hand the account of hours to crave,  
Being your vassal, bound to stay your leisure.  
O let me suffer (being at your beck)  
The imprison'd absence of your liberty,  
And patience tame, to sufferance bide each check,  
Without accusing you of injury.  
Be where you list, your charter is so strong  
That you yourself may privilege your time  
To what you will; to you it doth belong  
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.  
I am to wait, though waiting so be hell,  
Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.

## 59

If there be nothing new, but that which is  
Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,  
Which, laboring for invention, bear amiss  
The second burthen of a former child?  
O that record could with a backward look,  
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,  
Show me your image in some antique book,  
Since mind at first in character was done.  
That I might see what the old world could say  
To this composèd wonder of your frame;  
Whether we are mended, or where better they,  
Or whether revolution be the same.  
O sure I am, the wits of former days  
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

## 60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,  
So do our minutes hasten to their end,  
Each changing place with that which goes before,  
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.  
Nativity, once in the main of light,  
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,  
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,  
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.  
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,  
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,  
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,  
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:  
    And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,  
    Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

## 61

Is it thy will thy image should keep open  
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?  
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,  
While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?  
Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee  
So far from home into my deeds to pry,  
To find out shames and idle hours in me,  
The scope and tenor of thy jealousy?  
O no, thy love, though much, is not so great:  
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake,  
Mine own true love that dost my rest defeat,  
To play the watchman ever for thy sake.  
    For thee watch I whilst thou doth wake elsewhere,  
    From me far off, with others all too near.

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye  
And all my soul and all my every part;  
And for this sin there is no remedy,  
It is so grounded inward in my heart.  
Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,  
No shape so true, no truth of such account;  
And for myself mine own worth do define,  
As I all other in all worths surmount.  
But when my glass shows me myself indeed,  
Beated and chopped with tanned antiquity,  
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read;  
Self so self-loving were iniquity.

'Tis thee (myself) that for myself I praise,  
Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

Against my love shall be as I am now,  
With Time's injurious hand crushed and o'erworn,  
When hours have drained his blood and filled his brow  
With lines and wrinkles, when his youthful morn  
Hath travelled on to age's steepy night,  
And all those beauties whereof now he's king  
Are vanishing or vanished out of sight,  
Stealing away the treasure of his spring;  
For such a time do I now fortify  
Against confounding age's cruel knife,  
That he shall never cut from memory  
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life:  
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,  
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

## 64

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced  
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age;  
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,  
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;  
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain  
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore  
And the firm soil win of the watery main,  
Increasing store with loss and loss with store;  
When I have seen such interchange of state,  
Or state itself confounded to decay;  
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminare,  
That Time will come and take my love away.  
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose  
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

## 65

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,  
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,  
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea  
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?  
O how shall summer's honey breath hold out  
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,  
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,  
Nor gates of steel so strong but Time decays?  
O fearful meditation! where, alack,  
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?  
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?  
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?  
O none, unless this miracle have might,  
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry:  
As, to behold desert a beggar born,  
And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,  
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,  
And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,  
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,  
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,  
And strength by limping sway disabled,  
And art made tongue-tied by authority,  
And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,  
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,  
And captive good attending captain ill.

Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,  
Save that to die, I leave my love alone.

Ah wherefore with infection should he live  
And with his presence grace impiety,  
That sin by him advantage should achieve  
And lace itself with his society?  
Why should false painting imitate his cheek,  
And steal dead seeing of his living hue?  
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek  
Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?  
Why should he live, now Nature bankrupt is,  
Beggared of blood to blush through lively veins?  
For she hath no exchequer now but his,  
And proud of many, lives upon his gains.

O him she stores, to show what wealth she had  
In days long since, before these last so bad.

## 68

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,  
When beauty lived and died as flowers do now,  
Before these bastard signs of fair were born,  
Or durst inhabit on a living brow;  
Before the golden tresses of the dead,  
The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,  
To live a second life on second head,  
Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay:  
In him those holy antique hours are seen,  
Without all ornament itself and true,  
Making no summer of another's green,  
Robbing no old to dress his beauty new;  
And him as for a map doth Nature store,  
To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

## 69

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view  
Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend;  
All tongues (the voice of souls) give thee that due,  
Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.  
Thy outward thus with outward praise is crowned;  
But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,  
In other accents do this praise confound  
By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.  
They look into the beauty of thy mind,  
And that in guess they measure by thy deeds;  
Then, churls their thoughts (although their eyes were  
kind),  
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:  
But why thy odor matcheth not thy show,  
The soil is this, that thou dost common grow.

That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect,  
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;  
The ornament of beauty is suspect,  
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.  
So thou be good, slander doth but approve,  
Thy worth the greater being wooed of time;  
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,  
And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.  
Thou hast passed by the ambush of young days,  
Either not assailed, or victor being charged;  
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,  
To tie up envy evermore enlarged:  
If some suspect of ill masked not thy show,  
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead  
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell  
Give warning to the world that I am fled  
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:  
Nay, if you read this line, remember not  
The hand that writ it, for I love you so,  
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,  
If thinking on me then should make you woe.  
O if (I say) you look upon this verse  
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,  
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,  
But let your love even with my life decay;  
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,  
And mock you with me after I am gone.

## 72

O lest the world should task you to recite  
What merit lived in me that you should love,  
After my death, dear love, forget me quite,  
For you in me can nothing worthy prove;  
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,  
To do more for me than mine own desert,  
And hang more praise upon deceased I  
Than niggard truth would willingly impart:  
O lest your true love may seem false in this,  
That you for love speak well of me untrue,  
My name be buried where my body is,  
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.  
For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,  
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

## 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.  
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

## 74

But be contented when that fell arrest  
Without all bail shall carry me away,  
My life hath in this line some interest,  
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.  
When thou revicwest this, thou dost review  
The very part was consecrate to thee:  
The earth can have but earth, which is his due,  
My spirit is thine, the better part of me:  
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,  
The prey of worms, my body being dead,  
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,  
Too base of thee to be rememberèd.  
The worth of that is that which it contains,  
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

## 75

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,  
Or as sweet-seasoned showers are to the ground;  
And for the peace of you I hold such strife  
As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found;  
Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon  
Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure,  
Now counting best to be with you alone,  
Then bettered that the world may see my pleasure;  
Sometime all full with feasting on your sight,  
And by and by clean starvèd for a look;  
Possessing or pursuing no delight,  
Save what is had or must from you be took.  
Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,  
Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

## 76

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,  
So far from variation or quick change?  
Why with the time do I not glance aside  
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?  
Why write I still all one, ever the same,  
And keep invention in a notèd weed,  
That every word doth almost tell my name,  
Showing their birth and where they did proceed?  
O know, sweet love, I always write of you,  
And you and love are still my argument;  
So all my best is dressing old words new,  
Spending again what is already spent:  
For as the sun is daily new and old,  
So is my love still telling what is told.

## 77

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,  
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste;  
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,  
And of this book this learning mayst thou taste.  
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show  
Of mouthèd graves will give thee memory;  
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know  
Time's thievish progress to eternity.  
Look, what thy memory cannot contain,  
Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find  
Those children nursed, delivered from thy brain,  
To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.  
These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,  
Shall profit thee and much enrich thy book.

## 78

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse,  
And found such fair assistance in my verse,  
As every alien pen hath got my use  
And under thee their poesy disperse.  
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,  
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,  
Have added feathers to the learned's wing  
And given grace a double majesty.  
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,  
Whose influence is thine and born of thee:  
In others' works thou dost but mend the style,  
And arts with thy sweet graces gracèd be;  
    But thou art all my art, and dost advance  
    As high as learning, my rude ignorance.

## 79

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,  
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace;  
But now my gracious numbers are decayed,  
And my sick Muse doth give another place.  
I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument  
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen;  
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent  
He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.  
He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word  
For thy behavior; beauty doth he give,  
And found it in thy cheek: he can afford  
No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.  
    Then thank him not for that which he doth say,  
    Since what he owes thee thou thyself dost pay.

80

O how I faint when I of you do write,  
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,  
And in the praise thereof spends all his might,  
To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame.  
But since your worth (wide as the ocean is)  
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,  
My saucy bark (inferior far to his)  
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.  
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,  
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride,  
Or (being wrecked) I am a worthless boat,  
He of tall building and of goodly pride:  
Then if he thrive and I be cast away,  
The worst was this, my love was my decay.

81

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,  
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;  
From hence your memory death cannot take,  
Although in me each part will be forgotten.  
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,  
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die:  
The earth can yield me but a common grave,  
When you entombèd in men's eyes shall lie.  
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,  
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,  
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse,  
When all the breathers of this world are dead;  
You shall live—such virtue hath my pen—  
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,  
And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook  
The dedicated words which writers use  
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.  
Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,  
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise;  
And therefore art enforced to seek anew  
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days,  
And do so, love; yet when they have devised  
What strained touches rhetoric can lend,  
Thou truly fair wert truly sympathized  
In true plain words by thy true-telling friend;  
And their gross painting might be better used  
Where cheeks need blood; in thee it is abused.

I never saw that you did painting need,  
And therefore to your fair no painting set;  
I found, or thought I found, you did exceed  
The barren tender of a poet's debt:  
And therefore have I slept in your report,  
That you yourself, being extant, well might show  
How far a modern quill doth come too short,  
Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow.  
This silence for my sin you did impute,  
Which shall be most my glory, being dumb,  
For I impair not beauty being mute,  
When others would give life and bring a tomb.  
There lives more life in one of your fair eyes  
Than both your poets can in praise devise.

## 84

Who is it that says most, which can say more,  
Than this rich praise, that you alone are you,  
In whose confine immurèd is the store  
Which should example where your equal grew?  
Lean penury within that pen doth dwell,  
That to his subject lends not some small glory;  
But he that writes of you, if he can tell  
That you are you, so dignifies his story.  
Let him but copy what in you is writ,  
Not making worse what nature made so clear,  
And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,  
Making his style admirèd everywhere.  
You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,  
Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.

## 85

My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,  
While comments of your praise, richly compiled,  
Reserve their character with golden quill,  
And precious phrase by all the Muses filed.  
I think good thoughts, whilst other write good words,  
And, like unlettered clerk, still cry 'Amen,'  
To every hymn that able spirit affords,  
In polished form of well refinèd pen.  
Hearing you praised, I say ' 'Tis so, 'tis true,'  
And to the most of praise add something more;  
But that is in my thought, whose love to you,  
Though words come hindmost, holds his rank before.  
Then others for the breath of words respect,  
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,  
Bound for the prize of all too precious you,  
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,  
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?  
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write  
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?  
No, neither he nor his compeers by night  
Giving him aid, my verse astonished.  
He nor that affable familiar ghost  
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,  
As victors of my silence cannot boast;  
I was not sick of any fear from thence:  
    But when your countenance filled up his line,  
    Then lacked I matter; that enfeebled mine.

Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,  
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate:  
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;  
My bonds in thee are all determinate.  
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?  
And for that riches where is my deserving?  
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,  
And so my patent back again is swerving.  
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,  
Or me to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;  
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,  
Comes home again, on better judgment making.  
    Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter,  
    In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

## 88

When thou shalt be disposed to set me light,  
And place my merit in the eye of scorn,  
Upon thy side against myself I 'll fight,  
And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn.  
With mine own weakness being best acquainted,  
Upon thy part I can set down a story  
Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attained;  
That thou in losing me shalt win much glory:  
And I by this will be a gainer too,  
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,  
The injuries that to myself I do,  
Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.  
Such is my love, to thee I so belong,  
That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.

## 89

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,  
And I will comment upon that offence;  
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,  
Against thy reasons making no defence.  
Thou canst not, love, disgrace me half so ill,  
To set a form upon desired change,  
As I 'll myself disgrace, knowing thy will,  
I will acquaintance strangle and look strange;  
Be absent from thy walks; and in my tongue  
Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,  
Lest I, too much profane, should do it wrong,  
And haply of our old acquaintance tell.  
For thee, against myself I 'll vow debate,  
For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;  
Now while the world is bent my deeds to cross,  
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,  
And do not drop in for an after-loss:  
Ah, do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow,  
Come in the rearward of a conquered woe;  
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,  
To linger out a purposed overthrow.  
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,  
When other petty griefs have done their spite,  
But in the onset come: so shall I taste  
At first the very worst of fortune's might;  
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,  
Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,  
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force;  
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill;  
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse;  
And every humor hath his adjunct pleasure,  
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest:  
But these particulars are not my measure;  
All these I better in one general best.  
Thy love is better than high birth to me,  
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,  
Of more delight than hawks or horses be;  
And having thee, of all men's pride I boast:  
Wretched in this alone, that thou mayst take  
All this away and me most wretched make.

## 92

But do thy worst to steal thyself away,  
For term of life thou art assurèd mine;  
And life no longer than thy love will stay,  
For it depends upon that love of thine.  
Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,  
When in the least of them my life hath end.  
I see a better state to me belongs  
Than that which on thy humor doth depend.  
Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,  
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie;  
O what a happy title do I find,  
Happy to have thy love, happy to die!  
But what's so blessed fair that fears no blot,  
Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not.

## 93

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,  
Like a deccivèd husband; so love's face  
May still seem love to me, though altered-new:  
Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place.  
For there can live no hatred in thine eye,  
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change;  
In many's looks the false heart's history  
Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange,  
But heaven in thy creation did decree  
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell;  
Whate'er thy thoughts or thy heart's workings be,  
Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell.  
How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,  
If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show.

They that have power to hurt and will do none,  
That do not do the thing they most do show,  
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,  
Unmovèd, cold and to temptation slow:  
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces  
And husband nature's riches from expense;  
They are the lords and owners of their faces,  
Others but stewards of their excellence.  
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,  
Though to itself it only live and die,  
But if that flower with base infection meet,  
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:  
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;  
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame  
Which like a canker in the fragrant rose,  
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!  
O, in what sweets dost thou thy sins inclose!  
That tongue that tells the story of thy days,  
Making lascivious comments on thy sport,  
Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise;  
Naming thy name blesses an ill report.  
O what a mansion have those vices got  
Which for their habitation chose out thee,  
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot  
And all things turn to fair that eyes can see!  
Take heed (dear heart) of this large privilege:  
The hardest knife ill-used doth lose his edge.

## 96

Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness;  
Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport;  
Both grace and faults are loved of more and less:  
Thou mak'st faults graces that to thee resort.  
As on the finger of a thronèd queen  
The basest jewel will be well esteemed,  
So are those errors that in thee are seen  
To truths translated and for true things deemed.  
How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,  
If like a lamb he could his looks translate!  
How many gazers mightst thou lead away,  
If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state!  
But do not so; I love thee in such sort,  
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

## 97

How like a winter hath my absence been  
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!  
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!  
What old December's bareness every where!  
And yet this time removed was summer's time;  
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,  
Bearing the wanton burthen of the prime,  
Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease:  
Yet this abundant issue seemed to me  
But hope of orphans and unfathered fruit;  
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,  
And thou away, the very birds are mute;  
Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer  
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

From you have I been absent in the spring,  
When proud pied April, dressed in all his trim,  
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,  
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.  
Yet nor the lay of birds, nor the sweet smell  
Of different flowers in odor and in hue,  
Could make me any summer's story tell,  
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:  
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,  
Nor praise the deep vermillion in the rose;  
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,  
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.  
Yet seemed it winter still, and you away,  
As with your shadow I with these did play.

The forward violet thus did I chide:  
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,  
If not from my love's breath? The purple pride  
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells  
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed.  
The lily I condemnèd for thy hand,  
And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair;  
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,  
One blushing shame, another white despair;  
A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both,  
And to his robbery had annexed thy breath;  
But for his theft, in pride of all his growth  
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.  
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see  
But sweet or color it had stolen from thee.

## 100

Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long  
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?  
Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,  
Darkening thy power to lend base subjects light?  
Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem  
In gentle numbers time so idly spent;  
Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem  
And gives thy pen both skill and argument.  
Rise, resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,  
If Time have any wrinkle graven there;  
If any, be a satire to decay,  
And make Time's spoils despised every where.

Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life;  
So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife.

## 101

O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends  
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?  
Both truth and beauty on my love depends;  
So dost thou too, and therein dignified.  
Make answer, Muse: wilt thou not haply say,  
'Truth needs no color, with his color fix'd;  
Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay;  
But best is best, if never intermixed?'  
Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?  
Excuse not silence so, for 't lies in thee  
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,  
And to be praised of ages yet to be.  
Then do thy office, Muse; I teach thee how  
To make him seem long hence as he shows now.

## 102

My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming;  
I love not less, though less the show appear:  
That love is merchandised whose rich esteeming  
The owner's tongue doth publish every where.  
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,  
When I was wont to greet it with my lays,  
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,  
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:  
Not that the summer is less pleasant now  
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night  
But that wild music burthens every bough,  
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.  
Therefore like her, I sometime hold my tongue,  
Because I would not dull you with my song.

## 103

Alack, what poverty my Muse brings forth,  
That having such a scope to show her pride,  
The argument, all bare, is of more worth  
Than when it hath my added praise beside!  
O blame me not, if I no more can write!  
Look in your glass, and there appears a face  
That over-goes my blunt invention quite,  
Dulling my lines and doing me disgrace.  
Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,  
To mar the subject that before was well?  
For to no other pass my verses tend  
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell;  
And more, much more, than in my verse can sit,  
Your own glass shows you when you look in it.

## 104

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,  
For as you were when first your eye I cyed,  
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold  
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,  
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned,  
In process of the seasons have I seen,  
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,  
Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green.  
Ah yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,  
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;  
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,  
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived:  
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred;  
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

## 105

Let not my love be called idolatry,  
Nor my beloved as an idol show,  
Since all alike my songs and praises be  
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.  
Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind  
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;  
Therefore my verse to constancy confined,  
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.  
'Fair, kind, and true,' is all my argument,  
'Fair, kind, and true,' varying to other words,  
And in this change is my invention spent,  
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.  
'Fair, kind, and true,' have often lived alone,  
Which three till now never kept seat in one.

When in the chronicle of wasted time  
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,  
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme  
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,  
Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,  
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,  
I see their antique pen would have expressed  
Even such a beauty as you master now.  
So all their praises are but prophecies  
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;  
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,  
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:  
For we which now behold these present days,  
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul  
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,  
Can yet the lease of my true love control,  
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.  
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,  
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;  
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,  
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.  
Now with the drops of this most balmy time  
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,  
Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,  
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:  
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,  
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

*blazon, description*

108

What's in the brain, that ink may character,  
Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit?  
What's new to speak, what new to register  
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?  
Nothing, sweet boy, but yet like prayers divine,  
I must each day say o'er the very same,  
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,  
Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name.  
So that eternal love in love's fresh case  
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,  
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,  
But makes antiquity for aye his page;  
    Finding the first conceit of love there bred,  
    Where time and outward form would show it dead.

109

O, never say that I was false of heart,  
Though absence seemed my flame to qualify;  
As easy might I from myself depart  
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie:  
That is my home of love: if I have ranged,  
Like him that travels, I return again;  
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,  
So that myself bring water for my stain  
Never believe, though in my nature reigned  
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,  
That it could so preposterously be stained,  
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good:  
    For nothing this wide universe I call,  
    Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

## 110

Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there,  
 And made myself a motley to the view,  
 Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,  
 Made old offences of affections new.  
 Most true it is that I have looked on truth  
 Askance and strangely: but by all above,  
 These blenches gave my heart another youth,  
 And worse essays proved thee my best of love.  
 Now all is done, have what shall have no end:  
 Mine appetite I never more will grind  
 On newer proof, to try an older friend,  
 A god in love, to whom I am confined.  
     Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,  
     Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

## 111

O for my sake do you with Fortune chide,  
 The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,  
 That did not better for my life provide  
 Than public means which public manners breeds.  
 Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,  
 And almost thence my nature is subdued  
 To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:  
 Pity me then and wish I were renewed;  
 Whilst like a willing patient I will drink  
 Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection;  
 No bitterness that I will bitter think,  
 Nor double penance, to correct correction.  
     Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye  
     Even that your pity is enough to cure me.  
*eisel, vinegar*

## 112

Your love and pity doth the impression fill  
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow;  
For what care I who calls me well or ill,  
So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?  
You are my all the world, and I must strive  
To know my shames and praises from your tongue;  
None else to me, nor I to none alive,  
That my steeled sense or changes right or wrong.  
In so profound abysm I throw all care  
Of other's voices, that my adder's sense  
To critic and to flatterer stopped are.  
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:  
    You are so strongly in my purpose bred  
    That all the world besides methinks are dead.

## 113

Since I left you mine eye is in my mind,  
And that which governs me to go about,  
Doth part his function and is partly blind,  
Seems seeing, but effectually is out:  
For it no form delivers to the heart  
Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth latch:  
Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,  
Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch;  
For if it see the rudest or gentlest sight,  
The most sweet favor or deformed'st creature,  
The mountain or the sea, the day or night,  
The crow or dove, it shapes them to your feature:  
    Incapable of more, replete with you,  
    My most true mind thus maketh mine untrue.

## 114

Or whether doth my mind, being crowned with you,  
Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery?  
Or whether shall I say, mine eye saith true,  
And that your love taught it this alchemy,  
To make of monsters and things indigest  
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,  
Creating every bad a perfect best,  
As fast as objects to his beams assemble?  
O, 'tis the first; 'tis flattery in my seeing,  
And my great mind most kingly drinks it up:  
Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,  
And to his palate doth prepare the cup:  
If it be poisoned, 'tis the lesser sin  
That mine eye loves it and doth first begin.

## 115

Those lines that I before have writ do lie,  
Even those that said I could not love you dearer:  
Yet them my judgment knew no reason why  
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.  
But reckoning Time, whose millioned accidents  
Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,  
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,  
Divert strong minds to the course of altering things;  
Alas, why, fearing of Time's tyranny,  
Might I not then say 'Now I love you best,'  
When I was certain o'er incertainty,  
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?  
Love is a babe; then might I not say so,  
To give full growth to that which still doth grow?

## 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O, no! it is an ever-fixèd mark,  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
    If this be error and upon me proved,  
    I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

## 117

Accuse me thus: that I have scanted all  
Wherein I should your great deserts repay;  
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,  
Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day;  
That I have frequent been with unknown minds,  
And given to time your own dear-purchased right;  
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds  
Which should transport me farthest from your sight.  
Book both my wilfulness and errors down,  
And on just proof surmise accumulate;  
Bring me within the level of your frown,  
But shoot not at me in your wakened hate;  
    Since my appeals says I did strive to prove  
    The constancy and virtue of your love.

Like as to make our appetites more keen,  
With eager compounds we our palate urge;  
As, to prevent our maladies unseen,  
We sicken to shun sickness when we purge;  
Even so, being full of your ne'er cloying sweetness,  
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding;  
And sick of welfare found a kind of meetness  
To be diseased, ere that there was true needing.  
Thus policy in love, to anticipate  
The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,  
And brought to medicine a healthful state,  
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured:  
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,  
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

What potions have I drunk of Siren tears,  
Distilled from limbecks foul as hell within,  
Applying fears to hopes and hopes to fears,  
Still losing when I saw myself to win!  
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,  
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never!  
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,  
In the distraction of this madding fever!  
O benefit of ill! now I find true  
That better is by evil still made better;  
And ruined love, when it is built anew,  
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.  
So I return rebuked to my content,  
And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.

## 120

That you were once unkind befriended me now,  
And for that sorrow which I then did feel  
Needs must I under my transgression bow,  
Unless my nerves were brass or hammered steel.  
For if you were by my unkindness shaken  
As I by yours, you 've passed a hell of time;  
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken  
To weigh how once I suffer'd in your crime.  
O that our night of woe might have remembered  
My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,  
And soon to you, as you to me, then tendered  
The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits!  
But that your trespass now becomes a fee,  
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

## 121

'Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed,  
When not to be receives reproach of being;  
And the just pleasure lost, which is so deemed  
Not by our feeling, but by other's seeing:  
For why should others' false adulterate eyes  
Give salutation to my sportive blood?  
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,  
Which in their wills count bad what I think good?  
No, I am that I am, and they that level  
At my abuses reckon up their own:  
I may be straight though they themselves be bevel;  
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown.  
Unless this general evil they maintain,  
All men are bad and in their badness reign.

## 122

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain  
Full charactered with lasting memory,  
Which shall above that idle rank remain,  
Beyond all date, even to eternity;  
Or at the least, so long as brain and heart  
Have faculty by nature to subsist,  
Till each to razed oblivion yield his part  
Of thee, thy record never can be missed.  
That poor retention could not so much hold,  
Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score;  
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,  
To trust those tables that receive thee more:  
    To keep an adjunct to remember thee  
    Were to import forgetfulness in me.

## 123

No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change:  
Thy pyramids built up with newer might  
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;  
They are but dressings of a former sight.  
Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire  
What thou dost foist upon us that is old,  
And rather make them born to our desire  
Than think that we before have heard them told.  
Thy registers and thee I both defy,  
Not wondering at the present nor the past,  
For thy records and what we see doth lie,  
Made more or less by thy continual haste.  
    This I do vow, and this shall ever be,  
    I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee.

## 124

If my dear love were but the child of state,  
It might be Fortune's bastard be unfathered,  
As subject to Time's love or to Time's hate,  
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gathered.  
No, it was builded far from accident;  
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls  
Under the blow of thrallèd discontent,  
Whereto the inviting time our fashion calls:  
It fears not policy, that heretic,  
Which works on leases of short-numbered hours.  
But all alone stands hugely politic,  
That it nor grows with heat nor drowns with showers.  
To this I witness call the fools of time,  
Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

## 125

Were 't aught to me I bore the canopy,  
With my extern the outward honoring,  
Or laid great bases for eternity,  
Which prove more short than waste or ruining?  
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favor  
Lose all, and more, by paying too much rent,  
For compound sweet forgoing simple savor.  
Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent?  
No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,  
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,  
Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art  
But mutual render, only me for thee.  
Hence, thou suborned informer! a true soul  
When most impeached stands least in thy control.

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power  
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle, hour;  
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st  
Thy lovers withering as thy sweet self grow'st;  
If Nature (sovereign mistress over wrack)  
As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back,  
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill  
May time disgrace and wretched minutes kill.  
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure!  
She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure:  
Her audit, though delayed, answered must be,  
And her quietus is to render thee.

In the old age black was not counted fair,  
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;  
But now is black beauty's successive heir,  
And beauty slandered with a bastard shame:  
For since each hand hath put on nature's power,  
Fairing the foul with art's false borrowed face,  
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,  
But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.  
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,  
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem  
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,  
Slandering creation with a false esteem:  
Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,  
That every tongue says beauty should look so.

## 128

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st,  
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds  
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway'st  
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,  
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap  
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,  
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,  
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!  
To be so tickled, they would change their state  
And situation with those dancing chips,  
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,  
Making dead wood more blest than living lips.  
    Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,  
    Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

## 129

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame  
Is lust in action; and till action, lust  
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,  
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;  
Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight;  
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,  
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,  
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;  
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;  
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;  
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;  
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.  
    All this the world well knows; yet none knows well  
    To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.  
*jacks.*

## 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;  
And in some perfumes is there more delight  
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.  
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know  
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:  
I grant I never saw a goddess go,  
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:  
    And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare  
    As any she belied with false compare.

## 131

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,  
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;  
For well thou know'st to my dear dotting heart  
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.  
Yet in good faith some say that thee behold,  
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan:  
To say they err I dare not be so bold,  
Although I swear it to myself alone.  
And to be sure that is not false I swear  
A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face,  
One on another's neck, do witness bear  
Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.  
    In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,  
    And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.

## 132

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,  
Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,  
Have put on black and loving mourners be,  
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.  
And truly not the morning sun of heaven  
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,  
Nor that full star that ushers in the even  
Doth half that glory to the sober west,  
As those two mourning eyes become thy face:  
O let it then as well beseem thy heart  
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,  
And suit thy pity like in every part.  
Then will I swear beauty herself is black,  
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

## 133

Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan  
For that deep wound it gives my friend and me!  
Is 't not enough to torture me alone,  
But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?  
Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,  
And my next self thou harder hast engrossed;  
Of him, myself, and thee, I am forsaken;  
A torment thrice threefold thus to be crossed.  
Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,  
But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail;  
Who'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;  
Thou canst not then use rigor in my jail:  
And yet thou wilt, for I, being pent in thee,  
Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

## 134

So, now I have confessed that he is thine  
And I myself am mortgaged to thy will,  
Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine  
Thou wilt restore, to be my comfort still:  
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,  
For thou art covetous and he is kind;  
He learned but surety-like to write for me,  
Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.  
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,  
Thou usurer, that put'st forth all to use,  
And sue a friend, came debtor for my sake;  
So him I lose through my unkind abuse.  
Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me:  
He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.

## 135

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy 'Will,'  
And 'Will' to boot, and 'Will' in overplus;  
More than enough am I that vex thee still,  
To thy sweet will making addition thus.  
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,  
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?  
Shall will in others seem right gracious,  
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?  
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,  
And in abundance addeth to his store;  
So thou, being rich in 'Will,' add to thy 'Will'  
One will of mine, to make thy large 'Will' more.  
Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;  
Think all but one, and me in that one 'Will.'

## 136

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,  
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy 'Will,'  
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;  
Thus far for love, my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.  
'Will' will fulfil the treasure of thy love,  
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.  
In things of great receipt with ease we prove  
Among a number one is reckoned none:  
Then in the number let me pass untold,  
Though in thy store's account I one must be;  
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold  
That nothing me, a something sweet to thee:  
    Make but my name thy love, and love that still,  
    And then thou lov'st me, for my name is 'Will.'

## 137

Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,  
That they behold, and see not what they see?  
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,  
Yet what the best is, take the worst to be.  
If eyes, corrupt by over-partial looks,  
Be anchored in the bay where all men ride,  
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,  
Whereto the judgment of my heart is tied?  
Why should my heart think that a several plot  
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?  
Or mine eyes seeing this, say this is not,  
To put fair truth upon so foul a face?  
    In things right true my heart and eyes have erred,  
    And to this false plague are they now transferred.

## 138

When my love swears that she is made of truth,  
I do believe her, though I know she lies,  
That she might think me some untutored youth,  
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.  
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,  
Although she knows my days are past the best,  
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:  
On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.  
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?  
And wherefore say not I that I am old?  
O love's best habit is in seeming trust,  
And age in love loves not to have years told:  
Therefore I lie with her and she with me,  
And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

## 139

O call not me to justify the wrong  
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart;  
Wound me not with thine eye, but with thy tongue;  
Use power with power, and slay me not by art.  
Tell me thou lovest elsewhere; but in my sight,  
Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside;  
What need'st thou wound with cunning, when thy might  
Is more than my o'er-pressed defence can bide?  
Let me excuse thee: ah, my love well knows  
Her pretty looks have been mine enemies;  
And therefore from my face she turns my foes,  
That they elsewhere might dart their injuries:  
Yet do not so; but since I am near slain,  
Kill me outright with looks, and rid my pain.

## 140

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press  
My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain;  
Lest sorrow lends me words, and words express  
The manner of my pity wanting pain.  
If I might teach thee wit, better it were,  
Though not to love, yet love to tell me so;  
As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,  
No news but health from their physicians know;  
For if I should despair I should grow mad,  
And in my madness might speak ill of thee:  
Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,  
Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.  
That I may not be so, nor thou belied,  
Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go  
wide.

## 141

In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes,  
For they in thee a thousand errors note;  
But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,  
Who, in despite of view, is pleased to dote;  
Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted;  
Nor tender feeling, to base touches prone,  
Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited  
To any sensual feast with thee alone:  
But my five wits nor my five senses can  
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,  
Who leaves unswayed the likeness of a man,  
Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be:  
Only my plague thus far I count my gain,  
That she that makes me sin awards me pain.

142

Love is my sin and thy dear virtue hate,  
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving;  
O but with mine compare thou thine own state,  
And thou shalt find it merits not reproving;  
Or if it do, not from those lips of thine,  
That have profaned their scarlet ornaments  
And sealed false bonds of love as oft as mine,  
Robbed others' beds' revenues of their rents.  
Be it lawful I love thee, as thou lovest those  
Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee:  
Root pity in thy heart, that, when it grows,  
Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.

If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,  
By self-example mayst thou be denied!

143

Lo as a careful housewife runs to catch  
One of her feathered creatures broke away,  
Sets down her babe, and makes all swift dispatch  
In pursuit of the thing she would have stay;  
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,  
Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent  
To follow that which flies before her face,  
Not prizing her poor infant's discontent:  
So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,  
Whilst I thy babe chase thee afar behind;  
But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,  
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind:  
So will I pray that thou mayst have thy 'Will,'  
If thou turn back and my loud crying still.

## 144

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,  
Which like two spirits do suggest me still:  
The better angel is a man right fair,  
The worser spirit a woman colored ill.  
To win me soon to hell, my female evil  
Tempteth my better angel from my side,  
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,  
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.  
And whether that my angel be turned fiend  
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell;  
But being both from me, both to each friend,  
I guess one angel in another's hell:  
Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,  
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

## 145

Those lips that Love's own hand did make  
Breathed forth the sound that said 'I hate,'  
To me that languished for her sake:  
But when she saw my woeful state,  
Straight in her heart did mercy come,  
Chiding that tongue that ever sweet  
Was used in giving gentle doom;  
And taught it thus anew to greet;  
'I hate' she alter'd with an end,  
That followed it as gentle day  
Doth follow night who like a fiend  
From heaven to hell is flown away.  
'I hate' from hate away she threw,  
And saved my life saying 'not you.'

146

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,  
(Thrall to) these rebel powers that thee array,  
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,  
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?  
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,  
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?  
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,  
Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?  
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,  
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;  
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;  
Within be fed, without be rich no more:  
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,  
And Death once dead, there 's no more dying then.

147

My love is as a fever, longing still  
For that which longer nurseth the disease;  
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,  
The uncertain sickly appetite to please.  
My reason, the physician to my love,  
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,  
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve,  
Desire his death, which physic did except.  
Past cure I am, now reason is past care,  
And frantic mad with evermore unrest;  
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,  
At random from the truth vainly expressed;  
For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,  
Who are as black as hell, as dark as night.

148

O me, what eyes hath Love put in my head,  
Which have no correspondence with true sight!  
Or if they have, where is my judgment fled,  
That censures falsely what they see aright?  
If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote,  
What means the world to say it is not so?  
If it be not, then love doth well denote,  
Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no,  
How can it? O, how can Love's eye be true,  
That is so vexed with watching and with tears?  
No marvel then, though I mistake my view;  
The sun itself sees not till heaven clears.

O cunning Love! with tears thou keep'st me blind,  
Lest eyes well seeing thy foul faults should find.

149

Canst thou, O cruel, say I love thee not,  
When I against myself with thee partake?  
Do I not think on thee, when I forgot  
Am of myself, all tyrant for thy sake?  
Who hateth thee that I do call my friend?  
On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon?  
Nay, if thou lower'st on me, do I not spend  
Revenge upon myself with present moan?  
What merit do I in myself respect,  
That is so proud thy service to despise,  
When all my best doth worship thy defect,  
Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?

But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind;  
Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.

## 150

O from what power hast thou this powerful might  
With insufficiency my heart to sway?  
To make me give the lie to my true sight,  
And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?  
Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,  
That in the very refuse of thy deeds  
There is such strength and warrantise of skill,  
That in my mind thy worst all best exceeds?  
Who taught thee how to make me love thee more,  
The more I hear and see just cause of hate?  
O thoug'. I love what others do abhor,  
With others thou shouldst not abhor my state:  
    If thy unworthiness raised love in me,  
    More worthy I to be beloved of thee.

## 151

Love is too young to know what conscience is;  
Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?  
Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,  
Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove:  
For thou betraying me, I do betray  
My nobler part to my gross body's treason;  
My soul doth tell my body that he may  
Triumph in love; flesh stays no farther reason,  
But rising at thy name doth point out thee  
As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,  
He is contented thy poor drudge to be,  
To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.  
    No want of conscience hold it that I call  
    Her 'love' for whose dear love I rise and fall.

## 152

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,  
But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing;  
In act thy bed-vow broke, and new faith torn,  
In vowing new hate after new love bearing.  
But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,  
When I break twenty! I am perjured most,  
For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,  
And all my honest faith in thee is lost;  
For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,  
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy;  
And to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness,  
Or made them swear against the thing they see;  
For I have sworn thee fair; more perjured I,  
To swear against the truth so foul a lie!

## 153

Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleep:  
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,  
And this love-kindling fire did quickly steep  
In a cold valley-fountain of that ground;  
Which borrowed from this holy fire of Love  
A dateless lively heat, still to endure,  
And grew a seething bath which yet men prove  
Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.  
But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fired,  
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast;  
I, sick wirhal, the help of bath desired,  
And thither hied, a sad distempered guest,  
But found no cure: the bath for my help lies  
Where Cupid got new fire, my mistress' eyes.

The little Love-god lying once asleep  
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,  
Whilst many nymphs that vowed chaste life to keep  
Came tripping by; but in her maiden hand  
The fairest votary took up that fire  
Which many legions of true hearts had warmed;  
And so the general of hot desire  
Was sleeping by a virgin hand disarmed.  
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,  
Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual,  
Growing a bath and healthful remedy  
For men diseased; but I, my mistress' thrall,  
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove,  
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

AMORETTI AND EPITHALAMION  
BY  
EDMUND SPENSER  
(1552-1599)



# EDMUND SPENSER

## AMORETTI

### I

Happy, ye leaves! whenas those lily hands  
Which hold my life in their dead-doing might  
Shall handle you, and hold in love's soft bands,  
Like captives trembling at the victor's sight.  
And happy lines! on which with starry light  
Those laming eyes will deign sometimes to look,  
And read the sorrows of my dying spright,  
Written with tears in heart's close-bleeding book.  
And happy rhymes! bathed in the sacred brook  
Of Helicon, whence she derivèd is.  
When ye behold that Angel's blessed look,  
My soul's long-lackèd food, my heaven's bliss,  
Leaves, lines, and rhymes, seek her to please **alone**,  
Whom if ye please, I care for other none!

## 2

Unquiet thought! whom at the first I bred  
Of th' inward bale of my love-pinèd heart,  
And sithens have with sighs and sorrows fed,  
Till greater then my womb thou woxen art,  
Break forth at length out of the inner part,  
In which thou lurkest like to vipers' brood,  
And seek some succor both to ease my smart,  
And also to sustain thyself with food.  
But if in presence of that fairest Proud  
Thou chance to come, fall lowly at her feet;  
And with meeek humblesse and afflicted mood  
Pardon for thee, and grace for me, intreat:  
Which if she grant, then live, and my love cherish:  
If not, die soon, and I with thee will perish.

## 3

The sovereign beauty which I do admire,  
Witness the world how worthy to be praised!  
The light wherof hath kindled heavenly fire  
In my frail spirit, by her from baseness raised;  
That, being now with her huge brightness dazed,  
Base thing I can no more endure to view:  
But looking still on her, I stand amazed  
At wondrous sight of so celestial hue.  
So when my tongue would speak her praises due,  
It stoppèd is with thought's astonishment;  
And when my pen would write her titles true,  
It ravished is with fancy's wonderment:  
Yet in my heart I then both speak and write  
The wonder that my wit cannot endite.

## 4

New year, forth looking out of Janus' gate,  
Doth seem to promise hope of new delight,  
And bidding the' old adieu, his passèd date  
Bids all old thoughts to die in dumpish spright;  
And calling forth out of sad Winter's night  
Fresh Love, that long hath slept in cheerless bower,  
Wills him awake, and soon about him dight  
His wanton wings and darts of deadly power.  
For lusty Spring now in his timely hour  
Is ready to come forth, him to receive;  
And warns the Earth with divers colored flower  
To deck herself and her fair mantle weave.  
Then you, fair flower! in whom fresh youth doth rain,  
Prepare yourself new love to entertain.

## 5

Rudely thou wrongest my dear heart's desire,  
In finding fault with her too portly pride:  
The thing which I do most in her admire,  
Is of the world unworthy most envied.  
For in those lofty looks is close implied  
Scorn of base things, and 'sdain of foul dishonor;  
Threatening rash eyes which gaze on her so wide,  
That loosely they ne dare to look upon her.  
Such pride is praise, such portliness is honor,  
That boldnèd innocence bears in her eyes,  
And her fair countenance, like a goodly banner,  
Spreads in defiance of all enemies.  
Was never in this world ought worthy tried,  
Without some spark of such self-pleasing pride.  
*dumpish, mournful; tried, found*

## 6

Be nought dismayed that her unmovèd mind  
Doth still persist in her rebellious pride:  
Such love, not like to lusts of baser kind,  
The harder won the firmer will abide.  
The dureful oak whose sap is not yet dried  
Is long ere it conceive the kindling fire;  
But when it once doth burn, it doth divide  
Great heat, and makes his flames to heaven aspire.  
So hard it is to kindle new desire  
In gentle breast, that shall endure forever:  
Deep is the wound that dints the parts entire  
With chaste affects, that nought but death can sever.  
Then think not long in taking little pain  
To knit the knot that ever shall remain.

## 7

Fair eyes! the mirror of my mazèd heart,  
What wondrous virtue is contained in you,  
The which both life and death forth from you dart  
Into the object of your mighty view?  
For when ye mildly look with lovely hue,  
Then is my soul with life and love inspired:  
But when ye lower, or look on me askew,  
Then do I die, as one with lightning fired.  
But since that life is more than death desired,  
Look ever lovely, as becomes you best;  
That your bright beams, of my weak eyes admired,  
May kindle living fire within my breast.  
Such life should be the honor of your light,  
Such death the sad ensample of your might.  
*entire. inward*

## 8

More than most fair, full of the living fire  
Kindled above unto the Maker near,  
No eyes but joys, in which all powers conspire,  
That to the world nought else be counted dear!  
Through your bright beams doth not the blinded guest  
Shoot out his darts to base affections wound;  
But angels come, to lead frail minds to rest  
In chaste desires, on heavenly beauty bound.  
You frame my thoughts, and fashion me within;  
You stop my tongue, and teach my heart to speak;  
You calm the storm that passion did begin,  
Strong through your cause, but by your virtue weak.  
Dark is the world, where your light shined never;  
Well is he born that may behold you ever.

## 9

Long-while I sought to what I might compare  
Those powerful eyes which lighten my dark spright;  
Yet find I nought on earth, to which I dare  
Resemble th' image of their goodly light.  
Not to the sun, for they do shine by night;  
Nor to the moon, for they are changèd never;  
Nor to the stars, for they have purer sight;  
Nor to the fire, for they consume not ever;  
Nor to the lightning, for they still perséver;  
Nor to the diamond, for they are more tender;  
Nor unto crystal, for nought may them sever;  
Nor unto glass, such baseness might offend her.  
Then to the Maker self they likest be,  
Whose light doth lighten all that here we see.

## 10

Unrighteous Lord of love, what law is this,  
That me thou makest thus tormented be,  
The whiles she lordeth in licentious bliss  
Of her freewill, scorning both thee and me?  
See! how the Tyranness doth joy to see  
The huge massacres which her eyes do make,  
And humbled hearts brings captive unto thee,  
That thou of them mayst mighty vengeance take.  
But her proud heart do thou a little shake,  
And that high look, with which she doth control  
All this world's pride, how to a baser make,  
And all her faults in thy black book enroll:  
That I may laugh at her in equal sort  
As she doth laugh at me, and makes my pain her sport.

## 11

Daily when I do seek and sue for peace,  
And hostages do offer for my truth,  
She, cruel warrior, doth herself address  
To battle and the weary war renew'th;  
Ne will be moved, with reason or with ruth,  
To grant small respite to my restless toil;  
But greedily her fell intent pursu'th,  
Of my poor life to make unpitied spoil.  
Yet my poor life, all sorrows to assoil,  
I would her yield, her wrath to pacify;  
But then she seeks, with torment and turmoil,  
To force me live, and will not let me die.  
All pain hath end, and every war hath peace;  
But mine, no price nor prayer may surcease.  
*make, mate*

12

One day I sought with her heart-thrilling eyes  
 To make a truce, and terms to entertain;  
 All fearless then of so false enemies,  
 Which sought me to entrap in treason's train.  
 So, as I then disarmèd did remain,  
 A wicked ambush, which lay hidden long  
 In the close covert of her guileful eyen,  
 Thence breaking forth, did thick about me throng.  
 Too feeble I t' abide the brunt so strong,  
 Was forced to yield myself into their hands;  
 Who, me captiving straight with rigorous wrong,  
 Have ever since kept me in cruel bands.  
 So, Lady, now to you I do complain  
 Against your eyes, that justice I may gain.

13

In that proud port which her so goodly graceth,  
 Whiles her fair face she rears up to the sky,  
 And to the ground her eyelids low embaseth,  
 Most goodly temperature ye may descry;  
 Mild humblesse mixed with awful majesty;  
 For, looking on the earth whence she was born,  
 Her mind rememb'reth her mortality:  
 Whatso is fairest shall to earth return.  
 But that same lofty countenance seems to scorn  
 Base thing, and think how she to heaven may climb;  
 Treading down earth as loathsome and forlorn,  
 That hinders heavenly thoughts with drossy slime.  
 Yet lowly still vouchsafe to look on me;  
 Such lowliness shall make you lofty be.

## 14

Return again, my forces late dismayed,  
 Unto the siege by you abandoned quite.  
 Great shame it is to leave, like one afraid,  
 So fair a peece for one repulse so light.  
 'Gainst such strong castles needeth greater might  
 Than those small forts which ye were wont belay:  
 Such haughty minds, inured to hardy fight,  
 Disdain to yield unto the first assay.  
 Bring therefore all the forces that ye may,  
 And lay incessant battery to her heart;  
 Complaints, prayers, vows, ruth, sorrow and dismay;  
 Those engines can the proudest love convert:  
     And if those fail, fall down and die before her;  
     So dying live, and living do adore her.

## 15

Ye trade-full merchants that with weary toil  
 Do seek most precious things to make your gain,  
 And both the Indias of their treasure spoil,  
 What needeth you to seek so far in vain?  
 For lo! my Love doth in herself contain  
 All this world's riches that may far be found:  
 If sapphires, lo! her eyes be sapphires plain;  
 If rubies, lo! her lips be rubies sound;  
 If pearls, her teeth be pearls, both pure and round;  
 If ivory, her forehead ivory ween;  
 If gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;  
 If silver, her fair hands are silver sheen:  
     But that which fairest is but few behold:—  
     Her mind adorned with virtues manifold.  
*peece, fortification*

## 16

One day as I unwarily did gaze  
On those fair eyes, my love's immortal light,  
The whiles my 'stonished heart stood in amaze,  
Through sweet illusion of her looks' delight,  
I mote perceive how, in her glancing sight,  
Legions of Loves with little wings did fly,  
Darting their deadly arrows, fiery bright,  
At every rash beholder passing by.  
One of those archers closely I did spy,  
Aiming his arrow at my very heart:  
When suddenly, with twinkle of her eye,  
The damsel broke his misintended dart.  
    Had she not so done, sure I had been slain;  
    Yet as it was, I hardly 'scaped with pain.

## 17

The glorious portrait of that angel's face,  
Made to amaze weak men's confusèd skill,  
And this world's worthless glory to embase,  
What pen, what pencil, can express her fill?  
For though he colors could devise at will,  
And eke his learned hand at pleasure guide,  
Lest, trembling, it his workmanship should spill,  
Yet many wondrous things there are beside:  
The sweet eye-glances that like arrows glide,  
The charming smiles that rob sense from the heart,  
The lovely pleasance and the lofty pride,  
Cannot expressed be by any art.  
    A greater craftsman's hand thereto doth need,  
    That can express the life of things indeed.  
*spill, spoil*

## 18

The rolling wheel that runneth often round,  
The hardest steel in tract of time doth tear;  
And drizzling drops that often do redound,  
The firmest flint doth in continuance wear:  
Yet cannot I, with many a dropping tear  
And long entreaty, soften her hard heart,  
That she will once vouchsafe my plaint to hear,  
Or look with pity on my painful smart.  
But when I plead she bids me play my part;  
And when I weep she says, tears are but water;  
And when I sigh she says, I know the art;  
And when I wail she turns herself to laughter.  
So do I weep and wail and plead in vain,  
Whiles she as steel and flint doth still remain.

## 19

The merry cuckoo, messenger of Spring,  
His trumpet shrill hath thrice already sounded,  
That warns all lovers wait upon their king,  
Who now is coming forth with garland crownèd.  
With noise whereof the choir of birds resounded  
Their anthems sweet, devisèd of love's praise,  
That all the woods their echoes back rebounded,  
As if they knew the meaning of their lays.  
But 'mongst them all which did Love's honor raise,  
No word was heard of her that most it ought;  
But she his precept proudly disobeyes,  
And doth his idle message set at nought.  
Therefore, O love, unless she turn to thee  
Ere cuckoo end, let her a rebel be!

## 20

In vain I seek and sue to her for grace,  
And do mine humbled heart before her pour,  
The whiles her foot she in my neck doth place,  
And tread my life down in the lowly floor.  
And yet the lion that is lord of power,  
And reigneth over every beast in field,  
In his most pride disdaineth to devour  
The silly lamb that to his might doth yield.  
But she, more cruel and more savage wild  
Than either lion or the lioness,  
Shames not to be with guiltless blood defiled,  
But taketh glory in her cruelty.  
Fairer than fairest! let none ever say  
That ye were blooded in a yielded prey.

## 21

Was it the work of Nature or of Art,  
Which tempered so the feature of her face,  
That pride and meekness, mixed by equal part,  
Do both appear t' adorn her beauty's grace?  
For with mild pleasance, which doth pride displace,  
She to her love doth lookers' eyes allure;  
And with stern countenance back again doth chase  
Their looser looks that stir up lusts impure.  
With such strange terms her eyes she doth inure,  
That with one look she doth my life dismay,  
And with another doth it straight recure:  
Her smile me draws; her frown me drives away.  
Thus doth she train and teach me with her looks;  
Such art of eyes I never read in books!

## 22

This holy season, fit to fast and pray,  
Men to devotion ought to be inclined:  
Therefore I likewise, on so holy day,  
For my sweet saint some service fit will find.  
Her temple fair is built within my mind,  
In which her glorious image placèd is;  
On which my thoughts do day and night attend,  
Like sacred priests that never think amiss.  
There I to her, as the author of my bliss,  
Will build an altar to appease her ire;  
And on the same my heart will sacrifice,  
Burning in flames of pure and chaste desire:  
The which vouchsafe, O Goddess, to accept,  
Amongst thy dearest relics to be kept.

## 23

Penelope, for her Ulysses' sake,  
Devised a web her wooers to deceive;  
In which the work that she all day did make,  
The same at night she did again unreave.  
Such subtile craft my damsel doth conceive,  
Th' importune suit of my desire to shun;  
For all that I in many days do weave,  
In one short hour I find by her undone.  
So when I think to end that I begun,  
I must begin and never bring to end:  
For with one look she spills that long I spun,  
And with one word my whole year's work doth rend.  
Such labor like the spider's web I find,  
Whose fruitless work is broken with least wind.

When I behold that beauty's wonderment,  
And rare perfection of each goodly part,  
Of Nature's skill the only complement,  
I honor and admire the Maker's art.  
But when I feel the bitter baleful smart  
Which her fair eyes unwares do work in me,  
That death out of their shiny beams do dart,  
I think that I a new Pandora see,  
Whom all the gods in council did agree  
Into this sinful world from heaven to send,  
That she to wicked men a scourge should be,  
For all their faults with which they did offend.  
But since ye are my scourge, I will entreat  
That for my faults ye will me gently beat.

How long shall this like-dying life endure,  
And know no end of her own misery,  
But waste and wear away in terms unsure,  
'Twixt fear and hope depending doubtfully!  
Yet better were at once to let me die,  
And show the last ensample of your pride,  
Than to torment me thus with cruelty,  
To prove your power, which I too well have tried.  
But yet if in your hardened breast ye hide  
A close intent at last to show me grace,  
Then all the woes and wrecks which I abide,  
As means of bliss I gladly will embrace;  
And wish that more and greater they might be,  
That greater meed at last may turn to me.

## 26

Sweet is the rose but grows upon a brere,  
 Sweet is the juniper but sharp his bough,  
 Sweet is the eglantine but pricketh near,  
 Sweet is the firbloom but his branches rough,  
 Sweet is the cypress but his rind is rough,  
 Sweet is the nut but bitter is his pill,  
 Sweet is the broom-flower but yet sour enough,  
 And sweet is moly but his root is ill.  
 So every sweet with sour is tempered still,  
 That maketh it be coveted the more:  
 For easy things, that may be got at will,  
 Most sorts of men do set but little store.  
 Why then should I accompt of little pain,  
 That endless pleasure shall unto me gain!

## 27

Fair Proud! now tell me, why should fair be proud,  
 Sith all world's glory is but dross unclean,  
 And in the shade of death itself shall shroud,  
 However now thereof ye little ween!  
 That goodly idol, now so gay beseen,  
 Shall doff her flesh's borrowed fair attire,  
 And be forgot as it had never been,  
 That many now much worship and admire!  
 Ne any then shall after it enquire,  
 Ne any mention shall thereof remain,  
 But what this verse, that never shall expire,  
 Shall to you purchase with her thankless pain!  
 Fair! be no longer proud of that shall perish,  
 But that which shall you make immortal cherish.  
*brere, briar; rough, raw, crude; pill, peel*

## 28

The laurel-leaf which you this day do wear  
Gives me great hope of your relenting mind:  
For since it is the badge which I do bear,  
Ye, bearing it, do seem to me inclined.  
The power thereof, which oft in me I find,  
Let it likewise your gentle breast inspire  
With sweet infusion, and put you in mind  
Of that proud maid whom now those leaves attire:  
Proud Daphne, scorning Phoebus' lovely fire,  
On the Thessalian shore from him did fly;  
For which the gods, in their revengeful ire,  
Did her transform into a laurel tree.  
Then fly no more, fair Love, from Phoebus' chase,  
But in your breast his leaf and love embrace.

## 29

See! how the stubborn damsel doth deprave  
My simple meaning with disdainful scorn,  
And by the bay which I unto her gave  
Accounts myself her captive quite forlorn.  
The bay, quoth she, is of the victors born,  
Yielded them by the vanquished as their meeds,  
And they therewith do poets' heads adorn,  
To sing the glory of their famous deeds.  
But sith she will the conquest challenge needs,  
Let her accept me as her faithful thrall;  
That her great triumph, which my skill exceeds,  
I may in trump of fame blaze over all.  
Then would I deck her head with glorious bays,  
And fill the world with her victorious praise.

My Love is like to ice, and I to fire:  
 How comes it then that this her cold so great  
 Is not dissolved through my so hot desire,  
 But harder grows the more I her entreat?  
 Or how comes it that my exceeding heat  
 Is not delayed by her heart frozen cold,  
 But that I burn much more in boiling sweat,  
 And feel my flames augmented manifold?  
 What more miraculous thing may be told,  
 That fire, which all things melts, should harden ice,  
 And ice, which is congealed with senseless cold,  
 Should kindle fire by wonderful device?

Such is the power of love in gentle mind,  
 That it can alter all the course of kind.

Ah! why hath Nature to so hard a heart  
 Given so goodly gifts of beauty's grace,  
 Whose pride depraves each other better part,  
 And all those precious ornaments deface?  
 Sith to all other beasts of bloody race  
 A dreadful countenance she given hath,  
 That with their terror all the rest may chase,  
 And warn to shun the danger of their wrath.  
 But my proud one doth work the greater scath,  
 Through sweet allurements of her lovely hue,  
 That she the better may in bloody bath  
 Of such poor thralls her cruel hands embrue.  
 But did she know how ill these two accord,  
 Such cruelty she would have soon abhorred.  
*delayed, tempered*

## 32

The painful smith with force of fervent heat  
The hardest iron soon doth mollify,  
That with his heavy sledge he can it beat,  
And fashion to what he it list apply.  
Ye cannot all these flames, in which I fry,  
Her heart, more hard than iron, soft a whit,  
Ne all the plaints and prayers with which I  
Do beat on th' anvil of her stubborn wit:  
But still, the more she fervent sees my fit,  
The more she freezeth in her wilful pride,  
And harder grows, the harder she is smit  
With all the plaints which to her be applied.  
What then remains but I to ashes burn,  
And she to stones at length all frozen turn?

## 33

Great wrong I do, I can it not deny,  
To that most sacred Empress, my dear dread,  
Not finishing her Queen of Faëry,  
That mote enlarge her living praises, dead.  
But Lodwick, this of grace to me aread:  
Do ye not think the accomplishment of it  
Sufficient work for one man's simple head,  
All were it, as the rest, but rudely writ?  
How then should I, without another wit,  
Think ever to endure so tedious toil,  
Sith that this one is tossed with troublous fit  
Of a proud Love, that doth my spirit spoil?  
Cease then till she vouchsafe to grant me rest,  
Or lend you me another living breast.

## 34

Like as a ship, that through the ocean wide,  
By conduct of some star doth make her way,  
Whenas a storm hath dimmed her trusty guide,  
Out of her course doth wander far astray;  
So I, whose star, that wont with her bright ray  
Me to direct, with clouds is overcast,  
Do wander now, in darkness and dismay,  
Through hidden perils round about me placed;  
Yet hope I well that, when this storm is past,  
My Helicē, the lodestar of my life,  
Will shine again, and look on me at last,  
With lovely light to clear my cloudy grief:  
Till then I wander care-full, comfortless,  
In secret sorrow, and sad pensiveness.

## 35

My hungry eyes, through greedy covetise  
Still to behold the object of their pain,  
With no contentment can themselves suffice;  
But having, pine, and having not, complain.  
For lacking it, they cannot life sustain;  
And having it, they gaze on it the more,  
In their amazement like Narcissus vain,  
Whose eyes him starved: so plenty makes me poor.  
Yet are mine eyes so fillèd with the store  
Of that fair sight, that nothing else they brook,  
But loathe the things which they did like before,  
And can no more endure on them to look.  
All this world's glory seemeth vain to me,  
And all their shows but shadows, saving she.

## 36

Tell me, when shall these weary woes have end?  
Or shall their ruthless torment never cease,  
But all my days in pining languor spend,  
Without hope of assuagement or release?  
Is there no means for me to purchase peace,  
Or make agreement with her thrilling eyes;  
But that their cruelty doth still increase,  
And daily more augment my miseries?  
But when ye have showed all extremities,  
Then think how little glory ye have gained  
By slaying him whose life, though ye despise,  
Mote have your life in honor long maintained.  
But by his death, which some perhaps will moan,  
Ye shall condemnèd be of many a one.

## 37

What guile is this, that those her golden tresses  
She doth attire under a net of gold,  
And with sly skill so cunningly them dresses,  
That which is gold or hair may scarce be told?  
Is it that men's frail eyes, which gaze too bold,  
She may entangle in that golden snare;  
And, being caught, may craftily enfold  
Their weaker hearts, which are not well aware?  
Take heed therefore, mine eyes, how ye do stare  
Henceforth too rashly on that guileful net,  
In which if ever ye entrappèd are,  
Out of her bands ye by no means shall get.  
Fondness it were for any, being free,  
To covet fetters, though they golden be!

## 38

Arion, when through tempest's cruel wrack,  
He forth was thrown into the greedy seas,  
Through the sweet music which his harp did make  
Allured a dolphin him from death to ease.  
But my rude music, which was wont to please  
Some dainty ears, cannot with any skill  
The dreadful tempest of her wrath appease,  
Nor move the dolphin from her stubborn will.  
But in her pride she doth persever still,  
All careless how my life for her decays:  
Yet with one word she can it save or spill.  
To spill were pity, but to save were praise!  
Choose rather to be praised for doing good,  
Than to be blamed for spilling guiltless blood.

## 39

Sweet smile! the daughter of the Queen of Love,  
Expressing all thy mother's powerful art,  
With which she wons to temper angry Jove,  
When all the gods he threats with thundering dart,  
Sweet is thy virtue, as thyself sweet art.  
For when on me thou shined'st late in sadness,  
A melting pleasance ran through every part,  
And me revived with heart-robbling gladness;  
Whilst rapt with joy resembling heavenly madness,  
My soul was ravished quite as in a trance  
And, feeling thence no more her sorrow's sadness,  
Fed on the fulness of that cheerful glance.  
More sweet than nectar, or ambrosial meat,  
Seemed every bit which thenceforth I did eat.

## 40

Mark when she smiles with amiable cheer,  
And tell me whereto can ye liken it;  
When on each eyelid sweetly do appear  
An hundred Graces as in shade to sit.  
Likest it seemeth, in my simple wit,  
Unto the fair sunshine on summer's day,  
That when a dreadful storm away is flit  
Through the broad world doth spread his goodly ray;  
At sight whereof, each bird that sits on spray,  
And every beast that to his den was fled,  
Come forth afresh out of their late dismay,  
And to the light lift up their drooping head.  
So my storm-beaten heart likewise is cheered  
With that sunshine, when cloudy looks are cleared.

## 41

Is it her nature or is it her will,  
To be so cruel to an humbled foe?  
If nature, then she may it mend with skill;  
If will, then she at will may will forego.  
But if her nature and her will be so,  
That she will plague the man that loves her most,  
And take delight t' increase a wretch's woe,  
Then all her nature's goodly gifts are lost;  
And that same glorious beauty's idle boast  
Is but a bait such wretches to beguile,  
As, being long in her love's tempest tossed,  
She means at last to make her piteous spoil.  
O fairest fair! let never it be named,  
That so fair beauty was so foully shamed.

## 42

The love which me so cruelly tormenteth  
So pleasing is in my extremest pain,  
That, all the more my sorrow it augmenteth,  
The more I love and do embrace my bane.  
Ne do I wish (for wishing were but vain)  
To be acquit fro my continual smart,  
But joy her thrall forever to remain,  
And yield for pledge my poor and captived heart;  
The which, that it from her may never start,  
Let her, if please her, bind with adamant chain,  
And from all wandering loves, which mote pervart  
His safe assurance, strongly it restrain.  
    Only let her abstain from cruelty,  
    And do me not before my time to die.

## 43

Shall I then silent be or shall I speak?  
And if I speak, her wrath renew I shall;  
And if I silent be, my heart will break,  
Or chokèd be with overflowing gall.  
What tyranny is this, both my heart to thrall,  
And eke my tongue with proud restraint to tie,  
That neither I may speak nor think at all,  
But like a stupid stock in silence die!  
Yet I my heart with silence secretly  
Will teach to speak and my just cause to plead,  
And eke mine eyes, with meek humility,  
Love-learned letters to her eyes to read;  
    Which her deep wit, that true heart's thought can spell,  
    Will soon conceive, and learn to construe well.

## 44

When those renownèd noble peers of Greece  
Through stubborn pride among themselves did jar,  
Forgetful of the famous golden fleece,  
Then Orpheus with his harp their strife did bar.  
But this continual, cruel, civil war  
The which myself against myself do make,  
Whilst my weak powers of passions warrèd are,  
No skill can stint, nor reason can aslake.  
But when in hand my tuneless harp I take,  
Then do I more augment my foe's despise,  
And grief renew, and passions do awake  
To battle, fresh against myself to fight.  
    Monst whom the more I seek to settle peace,  
    The more I find their malice to increase.

## 45

Leave, Lady! in your glass of crystal clean  
Your goodly self for evermore to view,  
And in myself, (my inward self I mean,)  
Most lively-like behold your semblant true.  
Within my heart, though hardly it can shew  
Thing so divine to view of earthly eye,  
The fair idea of your celestial hue  
And every part remains immortally:  
And were it not that through your cruelty  
With sorrow dimmèd and deformed it were,  
The goodly image of your visnomy,  
Clearer than crystal, would therein appear.  
    But if yourself in me ye plain will see,  
    Remove the cause by which your fair beams darkened  
    be.  
*visnomy, physiognomy*

## 46

When my abode's prefixèd time is spent,  
My cruel fair straight bids me wend my way:  
But then from heaven most hideous storms are sent,  
As willing me against her will to stay.  
Whom then shall I—or heaven, or her—obey?  
The heavens know best what is the best for me:  
But as she will whose will my life doth sway,  
My lower heaven, so it perforce must be.  
But ye high heavens, that all this sorrow see,  
Sith all your tempests cannot hold me back,  
Assuage your storms or else both you and she  
Will both together me too sorely wrack.  
Enough it is for one man to sustain  
The storms which she alone on me doth rain.

## 47

Trust not the treason of those smiling looks,  
Until ye have their guileful trains well tried;  
For they are like but unto golden hooks,  
That from the foolish fish their baits do hide:  
So she with flattering smiles weak hearts doth guide  
Unto her love, and tempt to their decay;  
Whom, being caught, she kills with cruel pride,  
And feeds at pleasure on the wretched prey.  
Yet even whilst her bloody hands them slay,  
Her eyes look lovely and upon them smile,  
That they take pleasure in their cruel play,  
And dying do themselves of pain beguile.  
O mighty charm! which makes men love their bane,  
And think they die with pleasure, live with pain.

## 48

Innocent paper! whom too cruel hand  
Did make the matter to avenge her ire,  
And ere she could thy cause well understand,  
Did sacrifice unto the greedy fire;  
Well worthy thou to have found better hire  
Than so bad end, for heretics ordained;  
Yet heresy nor treason didst conspire,  
But plead thy master's cause, unjustly pained:  
Whom she, all careless of his grief, constrained  
To utter forth the anguish of his heart,  
And would not hear, when he to her complained  
The piteous passion of his dying smart.  
Yet live forever, though against her will,  
And speak her good, though she requite it ill.

## 49

Fair Cruel! why are ye so fierce and cruel?  
Is it because your eyes have power to kill?  
Then know that mercy is the Mighty's jewel,  
And greater glory think to save than spill.  
But if it be your pleasure and proud will  
To show the power of your imperious eyes,  
Then not on him that never thought you ill,  
But bend your force against your enemies.  
Let them feel the utmost of your cruelties,  
And kill with looks, as cockatrices do:  
But him that at your footstool humbled lies,  
With merciful regard give mercy to.  
Such mercy shall you make admired to be;  
So shall you live by giving life to me.

Long languishing in double malady,  
Of my heart's wound and of my body's grief,  
There came to me a leech that would apply  
Fit medicines for my body's best relief.  
Vain man, quoth I, that hast but little prief  
In deep discovery of the mind's disease;  
Is not the heart of all the body chief,  
And rules the members as itself doth please?  
Then with some cordials seek for to appease  
The inward languor of my wounded heart,  
And then my body shall have shortly ease.  
But such sweet cordials pass physician's art:  
Then, my life's leech! do you your skill reveal,  
And with one salve both heart and body heal.

Do I not see that fairest images  
Of hardest marble are of purpose made,  
For that they should endure through many ages,  
Ne let their famous monuments to fade?  
Why then do I, untrained in lovers' trade,  
Her hardness blame, which I should more commend?  
Sith never ought was excellent assayed  
Which was not hard t' achieve and bring to end;  
Ne ought so hard, but he that would attend  
Mote soften it and to his will allure.  
So do I hope her stubborn heart to bend,  
And that it then more steadfast will endure:  
Only my pains will be the more to get her;  
But having her, my joy will be the greater.

*prief, proof, test*

## 52

So oft as homeward I from her depart,  
I go like one that, having lost the field,  
Is prisoner led away with heavy heart,  
Despoiled of warlike arms and knowèn shield.  
So do I now myself a prisoner yield  
To sorrow and to solitary pain,  
From presence of my dearest dear exiled,  
Long-while alone in languor to remain.  
There let no thought of joy or pleasure vain  
Dare to approach, that may my solace breed;  
But sudden dumps, and dreary sad disdain  
Of all world's gladness, more my torment feed.  
So I her absence will my penance make,  
That of her presence I my meed may take.

## 53

The panther, knowing that his spotted hide  
Doth please all beasts but that his looks them fray,  
Within a bush his dreadful head doth hide,  
To let them gaze, whilst he on them may prey.  
Right so my cruel fair with me doth play;  
For with the goodly semblance of her hue  
She doth allure me to mine own decay,  
And then no mercy will unto me shew.  
Great shame it is, thing so divine in view,  
Made for to be the world's most ornament,  
To make the bait her gazers to embrue:  
Good shames to be to ill an instrument!  
But mercy doth with beauty best agree,  
As in their Maker ye them best may see.

## 54

Of this world's theatre in which we stay,  
My Love, like the spectator, idly sits,  
Beholding me, that all the pageants play,  
Disguising diversely my troubled wits.  
Sometimes I joy when glad occasion fits,  
And mask my mirth like to a comedy:  
Soon after, when my joy to sorrow flits,  
I wail and make my woes a tragedy.  
Yet she, beholding me with constant eye,  
Delights not in my mirth, nor rues my smart:  
But when I laugh, she mocks; and when I cry,  
She laughs, and hardens evermore her heart.  
What then can move her? If nor mirth, nor moan,  
**She is no woman, but a senseless stone.**

## 55

So oft as I her beauty do behold,  
And therewith do her cruelty compare,  
I marvel of what substance was the mould  
The which her made at once so cruel fair.  
Not earth, for her high thoughts more heavenly are;  
Not water, for her love doth burn like fire;  
Not air, for she is not so light or rare;  
Not fire, for she doth freeze with faint desire.  
Then needs another element inquire  
Whereof she mote be made: that is, the sky;  
For to the heaven her haughty looks aspire,  
And eke her love is pure immortal high.  
Then sith to heaven ye likened are the best,  
**Be like in mercy as in all the rest.**

## 56

Fair ye be sure, but cruel and unkind,  
As is a tiger, that with greediness  
Hunts after blood; when he by chance doth find  
A feeble beast, doth felly him oppress.  
Fair be ye sure, but proud and pitiless  
As is a storm, that all things doth prostrate;  
Finding a tree alone all comfortless,  
Beats on it strongly, it to ruinate.  
Fair be ye sure, but hard and obstinate  
As is a rock amidst the raging floods;  
Gainst which a ship, of succor desolate,  
Doth suffer wreck both of herself and goods.  
That ship, that tree, and that same beast am I,  
Whom ye do wreck, do ruin, and destroy.

## 57

Sweet warrior! when shall I have peace with you?  
High time it is this war now ended were,  
Which I no longer can endure to sue,  
Ne your incessant battery more to bear.  
So weak my powers, so sore my wounds, appear,  
That wonder is how I should live a jot,  
Seeing my heart through-lancèd everywhere  
With thousand arrows which your eyes have shot.  
Yet shoot ye sharply still and spare me not,  
But glory think to make these cruel stoures.  
Ye cruel one! what glory can be got,  
In slaying him that would live gladly yours?  
Make peace therefore and grant me timely grace,  
That all my wounds will heal in little space.  
*felly, harshly; stoures, agitations*

*By her that is most assured to herself.*

Weak is th' assurance that weak flesh repositeth  
In her own power, and scorneth others' aid;  
That soonest falls, whenas she most supposeth  
Herself assured, and is of nought afraid.  
All flesh is frail, and all her strength unstaid,  
Like a vain bubble blowen up with air:  
Devouring time and changeful chance have preyed  
Her glorious pride, that none may it repair.  
Ne none so rich or wise, so strong or fair,  
But faileth, trusting on his own assurance:  
And he that standeth on the highest stair  
Falls lowest, for on earth nought hath endurance.  
Why then do ye, proud fair, misdeem so far,  
That to yourself ye most assurèd are!

Thrice happy she that is so well assured  
Unto herself, and settled so in heart,  
That neither will for better be allured,  
Ne feared with worse to any chance to start:  
But like a steady ship doth strongly part  
The raging waves, and keeps her course aright,  
Ne ought for tempest doth from it depart,  
Ne ought for fairer weather's false delight.  
Such self-assurance need not fear the spite  
Of grudging foes, ne favor seek of friends:  
But in the stay of her own steadfast might,  
Neither to one herself nor other bends.  
Most happy she that most assured doth rest;  
But he most happy who such one loves best.

## 60

They that in course of heavenly spheres are skilled  
To every planet point his sundry year,  
In which her circle's voyage is fulfilled:  
As Mars in threescore years doth run his sphere.  
So since the winged god his planet clear  
Began in me to move, one year is spent;  
The which doth longer unto me appear,  
Than all those forty which my life outwent.  
Then by that count which lovers' books invent,  
The sphere of Cupid forty years contains,  
Which I have wasted in long languishment,  
That seemed the longer for my greater pains.  
But let my love's fair planet short her ways,  
This year ensuing, or else short my days.

## 61

The glorious image of the Maker's beauty,  
My sovereign saint, the idol of my thought,  
Dare not henceforth, above the bounds of duty,  
T' accuse of pride, or rashly blame for aught.  
For being, as she is, divinely wrought,  
And of the brood of angels heavenly born,  
And with the crew of blessed saints upbrought,  
Each of which did her with their gifts adorn;  
The bud of joy, the blossom of the morn,  
The beam of light, whom mortal eyes admire,  
What reason is it then but she should scorn  
Base things, that to her love too bold aspire?  
Such heavenly forms ought rather worshipped be,  
Than dare be loved by men of mean degree.

## 62

The weary year his race now having run,  
The new begins his compassed course anew:  
With show of morning mild he hath begun,  
Betokening peace and plenty to ensue.  
So let us, which this change of weather view,  
Change eke our minds, and former lives amend;  
The old year's sins forepast let us eschew,  
And fly the faults with which we did offend.  
Then shall the new year's joy forth freshly send  
Into the glooming world his gladsome ray,  
And all these storms which now his beauty blend,  
Shall turn to calms and timely clear away.

So likewise, love! cheer you your heavy spright,  
And change old year's annoy to new delight.

## 63

After long storms' and tempests' sad assay,  
Which hardly I endured heretofore,  
In dread of death, and dangerous dismay,  
With which my silly bark was tossèd sore,  
I do at length descry the happy shore,  
In which I hope ere long for to arrive:  
Fair soil it seems from far, and fraught with store  
Of all that dear and dainty is alive.  
Most happy he that can at last achieve  
The joyous safety of so sweet a rest;  
Whose least delight sufficeth to deprive  
Remembrance of all pains which him oppressed.

All pains are nothing in respect of this;  
All sorrows short that gain eternal bliss.

*blend, blemish*

## 64

Coming to kiss her lips, (such grace I found,)  
Meseemed I smelt a garden of sweet flowers,  
That dainty odors from them threw around,  
For damsels fit to deck their lovers' bowers.  
Her lips did smell like unto gillyflowers;  
Her ruddy cheeks like unto roses red;  
Her snowy brows like budded bellamours;  
Her lovely eyes like pinks but newly spread;  
Her goodly bosom like a strawberry bed;  
Her neck like to a bunch of columbines;  
Her breast like lilies, ere their leaves be shed;  
Her nipples like young blossomed jessamines.  
Such fragrant flowers do give most odorous smell;  
But her sweet odor did them all excel.

## 65

The doubt which ye misdeem, fair love, is vain,  
That fondly fear to lose your liberty,  
When, losing one, two liberties ye gain,  
And make him bond that bondage erst did fly.  
Sweet be the bands the which true love doth tie,  
Without constraint or dread of any ill:  
The gentle bird feels no captivity  
Within her cage, but sings and feeds her fill.  
There pride dare not approach, nor discord spill  
The league 'twixt them that loyal love hath bound,  
But simple truth and mutual good will  
Seeks with sweet peace to salve each other's wound:  
There faith doth fearless dwell in brazen tower,  
And spotless pleasure builds her sacred bower.

## 66

To all those happy blessings which ye have  
With plenteous hand by heaven upon you thrown,  
This one disparagement they to you gave:  
That ye your love lent to so mean a one.  
Ye whose high worth's surpassing paragon  
Could not on earth have found one fit for mate,  
Ne but in heaven matchable to none,  
Why did ye stop unto so lowly state?  
But ye thereby much greater glory gate,  
Than had ye sorted with a prince's peer:  
For now your light doth more itself dilate,  
And in my darkness greater doth appear.  
Yet since your light hath once enluminèd me,  
With my reflex yours shall increased be.

## 67

Like as a huntsman after weary chase,  
Seeing the game from him escaped away,  
Sits down to rest him in some shady place,  
With panting hounds beguiled of their prey;  
So after long pursuit and vain assay,  
When I all weary had the chase forsook,  
The gentle deer returned the selfsame way,  
Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brook.  
There she, beholding me with milder look,  
Sought not to fly, but fearless still did bide,  
Till I in hand her yet half trembling took,  
And with her own goodwill her firmly tied.  
Strange thing, mescemed, to see a beast so wild,  
So goodly won, with her own will beguiled.

## 68

Most glorious Lord of life! that on this day  
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin,  
And having harrowed hell, didst bring away  
Captivity thence captive, us to win.  
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin!  
And grant that we for whom thou diddest die,  
Being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,  
May live forever in felicity;  
And that thy love we, weighing worthily,  
May likewise love thee for the same again,  
And for thy sake that all like dear didst buy,  
With love may one another entertain!  
So let us love, dear love, like as we ought:  
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

## 69

The famous warriors of the antique world  
Used trophies to erect in stately wise,  
In which they would the records have enrolled  
Of their great deeds and valorous emprise.  
What trophy then shall I most fit devise,  
In which I may record the memory  
Of my love's conquest, peerless beauty's prize,  
Adorned with honor, love, and chastity!  
Even this verse, vowed to eternity,  
Shall be thereof immortal monument,  
And tell her praise to all posterity,  
That may admire such world's rare wonderment:  
The happy purchase of my glorious spoil,  
Gotten at last with labor and long toil.

## 70

Fresh Spring, the herald of love's mighty king,  
 In whose coat-armor richly are displayed  
 All sorts of flowers the which on earth do spring,  
 In goodly colors gloriously arrayed!

Go to my love, where she is careless laid,  
 Yet in her winter's bower not well awake:  
 Tell her the joyous time will not be stayed,  
 Unless she do him by the forelock take;  
 Bid her therefore herself soon ready make,  
 To wait on Love amongst his lovely crew,  
 Where everyone that misseth then her make  
 Shall be by him amerced with penance due.

Make haste therefore, sweet love, whilst it is prime;  
 For none can call again the passèd time.

## 71

I joy to see how in your drawen work  
 Yourself unto the Bee ye do compare,  
 And me unto the Spider that doth lurk  
 In close await to catch her unaware.  
 Right so yourself were caught in cunning snare  
 Of a dear foe, and thrallèd to his love;  
 In whose straight bands ye now captivèd are  
 So firmly that ye never may remove.  
 But as your work is woven all about  
 With woodbine flowers and fragrant eglantine,  
 So sweet your prison you in time shall prove,  
 With many dear delights bedeckèd fine:

And all thenceforth eternal peace shall see  
 Between the Spider and the gentle Bee.

*amerced, punished*

## 72

Oft when my spirit doth spread her bolder wings,  
In mind to mount up to the purest sky,  
It down is weighed with thought of earthly things,  
And clogged with burden of mortality:  
Where, when that sovereign beauty it doth spy,  
Resembling heaven's glory in her light,  
Drawn with sweet pleasure's bait it back doth fly,  
And unto heaven forgets her former flight.  
There my frail fancy, fed with full delight,  
Doth bathe in bliss, and mantleth most at ease;  
Ne thinks of other heaven, but how it might  
Her heart's desire with most contentment please.  
Heart need not wish none other happiness,  
But here on earth to have such heaven's bliss.

## 73

Being myself captivèd here in care,  
My heart, (whom none with servile bands can tie,  
But the fair tresses of your golden hair,)  
Breaking his prison, forth to you doth fly.  
Like as a bird, that in one's hand doth spy  
Desirèd food, to it doth make his flight,  
Even so my heart, that wont on your fair eye  
To feed his fill, flies back unto your sight.  
Do you him take and in your bosom bright  
Gently encage, that he may be your thrall:  
Perhaps he there may learn with rare delight  
To sing your name and praises over all:  
That it hereafter may you not repent,  
Him lodging in your bosom to have lent.

## 74

Most happy letters! framed by skilful trade,  
With which that happy name was first designed  
The which three times thrice happy hath me made,  
With gifts of body, fortune, and of mind.  
The first my being to me gave by kind,  
From mother's womb derived by due descent:  
The second is my sovereign Queen most kind,  
That honor and large riches to me lent:  
The third my love, my life's last ornament,  
By whom my spirit out of dust was raised,  
To speak her praise and glory excellent,  
Of all alive most worthy to be praised.

Ye three Elizabeths, forever live,  
That three such graces did unto me give!

## 75

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,  
But came the waves and washèd it away:  
Again I wrote it with a second hand,  
But came the tide and made my pains his prey.  
Vain man, said she, that dost in vain assay  
A mortal thing so to immortalize;  
For I myself shall like to this decay,  
And eke my name be wipèd out likewise.  
Not so! quod I, let baser things devise  
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:  
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,  
And in the heavens write your glorious name.

Where, whenas death shall all the world subdue,  
Our love shall live and later life renew.

76

Fair bosom! fraught with virtue's richest treasure,  
 The nest of love, the lodging of delight,  
 The bower of bliss, the paradise of pleasure,  
 The sacred harbor of that heavenly spright!  
 How was I ravished with your lovely sight,  
 And my frail thoughts too rashly led astray,  
 Whiles diving deep through amorous insight,  
 On the sweet spoil of beauty they did prey;  
 And twixt her paps, like early fruit in May,  
 Whose harvest seemed to hasten now apace,  
 They loosely did their wanton wings display,  
 And there to rest themselves did boldly place.

Sweet thoughts! I envy your so happy rest,  
 Which oft I wished, yet never was so blest.

77

Was it a dream, or did I see it plain?  
 A goodly table of pure ivory,  
 All spread with junkets fit to entertain  
 The greatest prince with pompous royalty:  
 Mongst which, there in a silver dish did lie  
 Two golden apples of unvalued price,  
 Far passing those which Hercules came by,  
 Or those which Atalanta did entice;  
 Exceeding sweet yet void of sinful vice,  
 That many sought yet none could ever taste;  
 Sweet fruit of pleasure, brought from Paradise  
 By Love himself, and in his garden placed.

Her breast that table was, so richly spread;  
 My thoughts the guests, which would thereon have fed.

*unvalued, invaluable*

Lacking my love, I go from place to place,  
Like a young fawn that late hath lost the hind,  
And seek each where where last I saw her face,  
Whose image yet I carry fresh in mind.  
I seek the fields with her late footing signed;  
I seek her bower with her late presence decked;  
Yet nor in field nor bower I can her find,  
Yet field and bower are full of her aspect.  
But when mine eyes I therunto direct,  
They idly back return to me again;  
And when I hope to see their true object,  
I find myself but fed with fancies vain.  
Cease then, mine eyes, to seek herself to see,  
And let my thoughts behold herself in me.

Men call you fair, and you do credit it,  
For that yourself ye daily such do see:  
But the true fair, that is the gentle wit  
And virtuous mind, is much more praised of me:  
For all the rest, however fair it be,  
Shall turn to nought and lose that glorious hue;  
But only that is permanent and free  
From frail corruption that doth flesh ensue.  
That is true beauty; that doth argue you  
To be divine and born of heavenly seed;  
Derived from that fair Spirit from whom all true  
And perfect beauty did at first proceed:  
He only fair, and what he fair hath made;  
All other fair, like flowers, untimely fade.

80

After so long a race as I have run  
 Through Faery land, which those six books compile,  
 Give leave to rest me, being half foredone,  
 And gather to myself new breath awhile.  
 Then as a steed refreshèd after toil,  
 Out of my prison I will break anew,  
 And stoutly will that second work assoil,  
 With strong endeavor and attention duc.  
 Till then give leave to me in pleasant mew  
 To sport my muse, and sing my love's sweet praise,  
 The contemplation of whose heavenly hue  
 My spirit to an higher pitch will raise.

But let her praises yet be low and mean,  
 Fit for the handmaid of the Faery Qucene.

81

Fair is my Love when her fair golden hairs  
 With the loose wind ye waving chance to mark;  
 Fair when the rose in her red cheeks appears,  
 Or in her eyes the fire of love does spark;  
 Fair when her breast, like a rich-laden bark,  
 With precious merchandise she forth doth lay;  
 Fair when that cloud of pride which oft doth dark  
 Her goodly light, with smiles she drives away.  
 But fairest she when so she doth display  
 The gate with pearls and rubies richly dight  
 Through which her words so wise do make their way,  
 The bear the message of her gentle spright.

The rest be works of Nature's wonderment;  
 But this the work of heart's astonishment.

*assoil*, discharge; *mew*, cage, retreat

## 82

Joy of my life! full oft for loving you  
I bless my lot that was so lucky placed:  
But then the more your own mishap I rue,  
That are so much by so mean love embased.  
For had the equal heavens so much you graced  
In this as in the rest, ye mote invent  
Some heavenly wit whose verse could have enchased  
Your glorious name in golden monument.  
But since ye deigned so goodly to relent  
To me your thrall, in whom is little worth,  
That little that I am shall all be spent  
In setting your immortal praises forth:  
Whose lofty argument, uplifting me,  
Shall lift you up unto an high degree.

## 83

Let not one spark of filthy lustful fire  
Break out, that may her sacred peace molest;  
Ne one light glance of sensual desire  
Attempt to work her gentle mind's unrest:  
But pure affections bred in spotless breast,  
And modest thoughts breathed from well-tempered sprites,  
Go visit her in her chaste bower of rest,  
Accompanied with ángelic delights.  
There fill yourself with those most joyous sights,  
The which myself could never yet attain:  
But speak no word to her of these sad plights  
Which her too constant stiffness doth constrain.  
Only behold her rare perfection,  
And bless your fortune's fair election.

84

The world, that cannot deem of worthy things,  
 When I do praise her, say I do but flatter:  
 So does the cuckoo, when the mavis sings,  
 Begin his witless note apace to clatter.  
 But they that skill not of so heavenly matter,  
 All that they know not, envy or admire;  
 Rather than envy, let them wonder at her,  
 But not to deem of her desert aspire.  
 Deep in the closet of my parts entire,  
 Her worth is written with a golden quill,  
 That me with heavenly fury doth inspire  
 And my glad mouth with her sweet praises fill:  
 Which whenas Fame in her shrill trump shall thunder,  
 Let the world choose to envy or to wonder.

85

Venomous tongue, tipped with vile adder's sting,  
 Of that self kind with which the Furies fell  
 Their snaky heads do comb, from which a spring  
 Of poisoned words and spiteful speeches well;  
 Let all the plagues and horrid pains of hell  
 Upon thee fall for thine accursed hire,  
 That with false forgèd lies which thou didst tell,  
 In my true love did stir up coals of ire:  
 The sparks whereof let kindle thine own fire,  
 And catching hold on thine own wicked head,  
 Consume thee quite, that didst with guile conspire  
 In my sweet peace such breaches to have bred!  
 Shame be thy meed and mischief thy reward,  
 Due to thyself that it for me prepared!  
*entire, inward*

## 86

Since I did leave the presence of my Love,  
Many long weary days I have outworn,  
And many nights that slowly seemed to move  
Their sad protract from evening until morn.  
For whenas day the heaven doth adorn,  
I wish that night the noyous day would end:  
And whenas night hath us of light forlorn,  
I wish that day would shortly reascend.  
Thus I the time with expectation spend,  
And fain my grief with changes to beguile,  
That further seems his term still to extend  
And maketh every minute seem a mile.

So sorrow still doth seem too long to last;  
But joyous hours do fly away too fast.

## 87

Since I have lacked the comfort of that light,  
The which was wont to lead my thoughts astray,  
I wander as in darkness of the night,  
Afraid of every danger's least dismay.  
Ne ought I see, though in the clearest day,  
When others gaze upon their shadows vain,  
But the only image of that heavenly ray  
Whereof some glance doth in mine eye remain.  
Of which beholding the Idea plain,  
Through contemplation of my purest part,  
With light thereof I do myself sustain,  
And thereon feed my love-affamished heart.

But with such brightness whilst I fill my mind,  
I starve my body and mine eyes do blind.

*noyous, injurious*

Like as the culver on the barèd bough  
Sits mourning for the absence of her mate,  
And in her songs sends many a wishful vow  
For his return that seems to linger late;  
So I alone, now left disconsolate,  
Mourn to myself the absence of my Love;  
And wandering here and there all desolate,  
Seek with my plaints to match that mournful dove:  
Ne joy of ought that under heaven doth hove  
Can comfort me but her own joyous sight,  
Whose sweet aspect both God and man can move,  
In her unspotted pleasance to delight.  
    Dark is my day whiles her fair light I miss,  
    And dead my life that wants such lively bliss.

## EPITHALAMION

Ye larned Sisters, which have oftentimes  
Been to me aiding, others to adorn  
Whom ye thought worthy of your graceful rhymes,  
That even the greatest did not greatly scorn  
To hear their names sung in your simple lays,  
But joyèd in their praise;  
And when ye list your own mishaps to mourn,  
Which death, or love, or fortune's wreck did raise,  
Your string could soon to sadder tenor turn,  
And teach the woods and waters to lament  
Your doleful dreariment:  
Now lay those sorrowful complaints aside,  
And having all your heads with garlands crowned,  
Help me mine own love's praises to resound;  
Ne let the same of any be envied:  
So Orpheus did for his ownè bride;

So I unto myself alone will sing;  
The woods shall to me answer, and my echo ring.

Early, before the world's light-giving lamp  
His golden beam upon the hills doth spread,  
Having dispersed the night's uncheerful damp,  
Do ye awake, and, with fresh lustyhed,  
Go to the bower of my beloved love,  
My truest turtle dove.  
Bid her awake; for Hymen is awake,  
And long since ready forth his mask to move,  
With his bright tead that flames with many a flake,  
And many a bachelor to wait on him,  
In their fresh garments trim.  
Bid her awake therefore, and soon her dight,  
For lo! the wished day is come at last,  
That shall for all the pains and sorrows past  
Pay to her usury of long delight:  
And whilst she doth her dight,  
Do ye to her of joy and solace sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

Bring with you all the nymphs that you can hear,  
Both of the rivers and the forests green,  
And of the sea that neighbors to her near,  
All with gay garlands goodly well beseen.  
And let them also with them bring in hand  
Another gay garland,  
For my fair love, of lilies and of roses,  
Bound truelove-wise with a blue silk riband.  
And let them make great store of bridal posies,  
And let them eke bring store of other flowers,  
To deck the bridal bowers:

*tead, torch; dight, dress; beseen, adorned*

And let the ground whereas her foot shall tread,  
 For fear the stones her tender foot should wrong,  
 Be strewed with fragrant flowers all along,  
 And diapered like the discolored mead.  
 Which done, do at her chamber door await,  
 For she will waken straight;  
 The whiles do ye this song unto her sing,  
 The woods shall to you answer, and your echo ring.

Ye Nymphs of Mulla, which with careful heed  
 The silver scaly trouts do tend full well,  
 And greedy pikes which use therein to feed,  
 (Those trouts and pikes all others do excel);  
 And ye likewise which keep the rushy lake,  
 Where none do fishes take,  
 Bind up the locks the which hang scattered light,  
 And in his waters, which your mirror make,  
 Behold your faces as the crystal bright,  
 That when you come whereas my Love doth lie,  
 No blemish she may spy.  
 And eke, ye lightfoot maids which keep the deer  
 That on the hoary mountain use to tower,  
 And the wild wolves, which seek them to devour,  
 With your steel darts do chase from coming near:  
 Be also present here,  
 To help to deck her, and to help to sing,  
 That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

Wake now, my love, awake! for it is time:  
 The rosy Morn long since left Tithon's bed,  
 All ready to her silver coach to climb,  
 And Phoebus gins to show his glorious head.  
 Hark! how the cheerful birds do chant their lays,  
 And carol of Love's praise:

*diapered, variegated*

The merry lark her matin sings aloft,  
The thrush replies, the mavis descant plays,  
The ouzel shrills, the ruddock warbles soft;  
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,  
To this day's merriment.  
Ah! my dear love, why do ye sleep thus long,  
When meeter were that ye should now awake,  
To await the coming of your joyous make,  
And hearken to the birds' love-learnèd song,  
The dewy leaves among!  
For they of joy and pleasance to you sing,  
That all the woods them answer, and their echo ring.

My love is now awake out of her dreams,  
And her fair eyes, like stars that dimmèd were  
With darksome cloud, now show their goodly beams  
More bright than Hesperus his head doth rear.  
Come now, ye damsels, daughters of delight,  
Help quickly her to dight.  
But first come, ye fair Hours, which were begot,  
In Jove's sweet paradise, of Day and Night,  
Which do the seasons of the year allot,  
And all that ever in this world is fair  
Do make and still repair:  
And ye three handmaids of the Cyprian Queen,  
The which do still adorn her beauty's pride,  
Help to adorn my beautifullest bride:  
And, as ye her array, still throw between  
Some graces to be seen;  
And, as ye use to Venus, to her sing,  
The whiles the woods shall answer, and your echo ring.

Now is my love all ready forth to come:  
Let all the virgins therefore well await,

*mavis*, thrush; *descant*, variation; *ousel*, blackbird; *ruddock*, European robin; *make*, mate

And ye fresh boys, that tend upon her groom,  
 Prepare yourselves, for he is coming straight.  
 Set all your things in seemly good array,  
 Fit for so joyful day,  
 The joyful'st day that ever sun did see.  
 Fair Sun! show forth thy favorable ray,  
 And let thy life-full heat not fervent be,  
 For fear of burning her sunshiny face,  
 Her beauty to disgrace.  
 O fairest Phoebus! father of the Muse!  
 If ever I did honor thee aright,  
 Or sing the thing that mote thy mind delight,  
 Do not thy servant's simple boon refuse,  
 But let this day, let this one day, be mine;  
 Let all the rest be thine.  
 Then I thy sovereign praises loud will sing,  
 That all the woods shall answer, and their echo ring.

Hark! how the minstrels 'gin to shrill aloud  
 Their merry music that resounds from afar,  
 The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling croud,  
 That well agree withouten breach or jar.  
 But most of all the damsels do delight,  
 When they their timbrels smite,  
 And thereunto do dance and carol sweet,  
 That all the senses they do ravish quite;  
 The whiles the boys run up and down the street,  
 Crying aloud with strong confusèd noise,  
 As if it were one voice,  
 "Hymen, Io Hymen, Hymen," they do shout;  
 That even to the heavens their shouting shrill  
 Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill;  
 To which the people, standing all about,  
 As in approvance, do thereto applaud,  
 And loud advance her laud;

*croud, fiddle*

And evermore they "Hymen, Hymen," sing,  
That all the woods them answer, and their echo ring.

Lo! where she comes along with portly pace,  
Like Phoebe, from her chamber of the East,  
Arising forth to run her mighty race,  
Clad all in white, that seems a virgin best.  
So well it her beseems, that ye would ween  
Some angel she had been.  
Her long loose yellow locks like golden wire,  
Sprinkled with pearl, and purling flowers atween,  
Do like a golden mantle her attire,  
And, being crownèd with a garland green,  
Seem like some maiden queen.  
Her modest eyes, abashèd to behold  
So many gazers as on her do stare,  
Upon the lowly ground affixèd are;  
Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,  
But blush to hear her praises sung so loud,—  
So far from being proud.  
Natheless do ye still loud her praises sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

Tell me, ye merchants' daughters, did ye see  
So fair a creature in your town before?  
So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,  
Adorned with beauty's grace and virtue's store?  
Her goodly eyes like sapphires shining bright,  
Her forehead ivory white,  
Her cheeks like apples which the sun hath rudded,  
Her lips like cherries, charming men to bite,  
Her breast like to a bowl of cream uncruddled,  
Her paps like lilies budded,  
Her snowy neck like to a marble tower,  
And all her body like a palace fair,  
Ascending up, with many a stately stair,

To honor's seat and chastity's sweet bower.  
 Why stand ye still, ye virgins, in amaze,  
 Upon her so to gaze,  
 Whiles ye forget your former lay to sing,  
 To which the woods did answer, and your echo ring?

But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,  
 The inward beauty of her lively spright,  
 Garnished with heavenly gifts of high degree,  
 Much more then would ye wonder at that sight  
 And stand astonished like to those which read  
 Medusa's mazeful head.  
 There dwells sweet Love, and constant Chastity,  
 Unspotted Faith, and comely Womanhood,  
 Regard of Honor, and mild Modesty;  
 There Virtue reigns as queen in royal throne,  
 And giveth laws alone,  
 The which the base affections do obey,  
 And yield their services unto her will;  
 Ne thought of things uncomely ever may  
 Thereto approach to tempt her mind to ill.  
 Had ye once seen these her celestial treasures,  
 And unrevealèd pleasures,  
 Then would ye wonder, and her praises sing,  
 That all the woods should answer, and your echo ring.

Open the temple gates unto my Love,  
 Open them wide that she may enter in,  
 And all the posts adorn as doth behove,  
 And all the pillars deck with garlands trim,  
 For to receive this saint with honor due,  
 That cometh in to you.  
 With trembling steps and humble reverence,  
 She cometh in before the Almighty's view:  
 Of her, ye virgins, learn obedience,

When so ye come into those holy places,  
To humble your proud faces.  
Bring her up to the altar, that she may  
The sacred ceremonies there partake,  
The which do endless matrimony make;  
And let the roaring organs loudly play  
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;  
The whiles, with hollow throats,  
The choristers the joyous anthem sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and their echo ring.

Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,  
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks  
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,  
How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,  
And the pure snow with goodly vermeil stain,  
Like crimson dyed in grain:  
That even the angels, which continually  
About the sacred altar do remain,  
Forget their service and about her fly,  
Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fair  
The more they on it stare.  
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,  
Are governèd with goodly modesty,  
That suffers not one look to glance awry,  
Which may let in a little thought unsound.  
Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,  
The pledge of all our band?  
Sing, ye sweet angels, Alleluia sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

Now all is done; bring home the bride again,  
Bring home the triumph of our victory,  
Bring home with you the glory of her gain,  
With joyance bring her and with jollity.

Never had man more joyful day than this,  
 Whom heaven would heap with bliss.  
 Make feast therefore now all this live-long day;  
 This day forever to me holy is.  
 Pour out the wine without restraint or stay,  
 Pour not by cups, but by the bellyful,  
 Pour out to all that wull,  
 And sprinkle all the posts and walls with wine,  
 That they may sweat and drunken be withal.  
 Crown ye god Bacchus with a coronal,  
 And Hymen also crown with wreaths of vine;  
 And let the Graces dance unto the rest,  
 For they can do it best:  
 The whiles the maidens do their carol sing,  
 To which the woods shall answer, and their echo ring.

Ring ye the bells, ye young men of the town,  
 And leave your wonted labors for this day:  
 This day is holy; do ye write it down,  
 That ye forever it remember may.  
 This day the sun is in his chieftest height,  
 With Barnaby the bright,  
 From whence declining daily by degrees,  
 He somewhat loseth of his heat and light,  
 When once the Crab behind his back he sees.  
 But for this time it ill ordainèd was,  
 To choose the longest day in all the year,  
 And shortest night, when longest fitter were:  
 Yet never day so long, but late would pass.  
 Ring ye the bells to make it wear away,  
 And bonfires make all day;  
 And dance about them, and about them sing,  
 That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

Ah! when will this long weary day have end.  
 And lend me leave to come unto my love?

*wull, will*

How slowly do the hours their numbers spend!  
How slowly does sad Time his feathers move!  
Haste thee, O fairest planet, to thy home  
Within the western foam:  
Thy tired steeds long since have need of rest.  
Long though it be, at last I see it gloam,  
And the bright evening-star with golden crest  
Appear out of the East.  
Fair child of beauty! glorious lamp of love!  
That all the host of heaven in ranks does lead,  
And guidest lovers through the night's sad dread,  
How cheerfully thou lookest from above,  
And seemst to laugh atween thy twinkling light,  
As joying in the sight  
Of these glad many, which for joy do sing,  
That all the woods them answer, and their echo ring!

Now cease, ye damsels, your delights fore-past;  
Enough it is that all the day was yours:  
Now day is done, and night is nighing fast;  
Now bring the bride into the bridal bowers.  
The night is come; now soon her disarray,  
And in her bed her lay;  
Lay her in lilies and in violets,  
And silken curtains over her display,  
And odored sheets, and arras coverlets.  
Behold how goodly my fair love does lie,  
In proud humility!  
Like unto Maia, whenas Jove her took  
In Tempe, lying on the flowery grass,  
'Twixt sleep and wake, after she weary was  
With bathing in the Acidalian brook.  
Now it is night, ye damsels may be gone,  
And leave my Love alone,  
And leave likewise your former lay to sing:  
The woods no more shall answer, nor your echo ring.

Now welcome, Night! thou night so long expected,  
That long day's labor dost at last defray,  
And all my cares, which cruel Love collected,  
Hast summed in one, and cancellèd for aye.  
Spread thy broad wing over my love and me,  
That no man may us see;  
And in thy sable mantle us enwrap,  
From fear of peril and foul horror free.  
Let no false treason seek us to entrap,  
Nor any dread disquiet once annoy  
The safety of our joy;  
But let the night be calm and quiet some,  
Without tempestuous storms or sad affray;  
Like as when Jove with fair Alcmena lay,  
When he begot the great Tirynthian groom;  
Or like as when he with thyself did lie,  
And begot Majesty:  
And let the maids and young men cease to sing;  
Ne let the woods them answer, nor their echo ring.

Let no lamenting cries, nor doleful tears,  
Be heard all night within, nor yet without:  
Ne let false whispers, breeding hidden fears,  
Break gentle sleep with misconceived doubt.  
Let no deluding dreams, nor dreadful sights,  
Make sudden sad affrights:  
Ne let house-fires, nor lightning's helpless harms,  
Ne let the Pouke, nor other evil sprites,  
Ne let michievous witches with their charms,  
Ne let hobgoblins, names whose sense we see not,  
'Fray us with things that be not:  
Let not the shriek-owl, nor the stork, be heard,  
Nor the night-raven, that still deadly yells,  
Nor damned ghosts, called up with mighty spells,  
Nor grisly vultures, make us once afraid:

*Pouke, Puck, Robin Goodfellow*

Ne let the unpleasant choir of frogs still croaking  
Make us to wish their choking.  
Let none of these their dreary accents sing;  
Ne let the woods them answer, nor their echo ring.

But let still Silence true night-watches keep,  
That sacred Peace may in assurance reign,  
And timely Sleep, when it is time to sleep,  
May pour his limbs forth on your pleasant plain;  
The whiles an hundred little wingèd Loves,  
Like divers-feathered doves,  
Shall fly and flutter round about the bed,  
And in the secret dark, that none reproves,  
Their pretty stealths shall work, and snares shall spread  
To filch away sweet snatches of delight,  
Concealed through covert night.  
Ye sons of Venus, play your sports at will!  
For greedy Pleasure, careless of your toys,  
Thinks more upon her paradise of joys,  
Than what ye do, albeit good or ill.  
All night, therefore, attend your merry play,  
For it will soon be day:  
Now none doth hinder you, that say or sing;  
Ne will the woods now answer, nor your echo ring.

Who is the same which at my window peeps?  
Or whose is that fair face that shines so bright?  
Is it not Cynthia, she that never sleeps,  
But walks about high heaven all the night?  
O fairest goddess! do thou not envy  
My love with me to spy:  
For thou likewise didst love, though now unthought,  
And for a fleece of wool, which privily  
The Latmian Shepherd once unto thee brought,  
His pleasures with thee wrought.  
Therefore to us be favorable now;

And sith of women's labors thou has charge,  
And generations goodly dost enlarge,  
Incline thy will to effect our wishful vow,  
And the chaste womb inform with timely seed,  
That may our comfort breed:  
Till which we cease our hopeful hap to sing,  
Ne let the woods us answer, nor our echo ring.

And thou, great Juno! which with awful might  
The laws of wedlock still dost patronize,  
And the religion of the faith first plight  
With sacred rites hast taught to solemnize,  
And eke for comfort often callèd art  
Of women in their smart,  
Eternally bind thou this lovely band,  
And all thy blessings unto us impart.  
And thou, glad Genius! in whose gentle hand  
The bridal bower and genial bed remain,  
Without blemish or stain,  
And the sweet pleasures of their love's delight  
With secret aid dost succor and supply,  
Till they bring forth the fruitful progeny,  
Send us the timely fruit of this same night.  
And thou, fair Hebe! and thou, Hymen free!  
Grant that it may so be.  
Till which we cease your further praise to sing,  
Ne any woods shall answer, nor your echo ring.

And ye high heavens, the temple of the gods,  
In which a thousand torches flaming bright  
Do burn, that to us wretched earthly clods  
In dreadful darkness lend desired light,  
And all ye powers which in the same remain,  
More than we men can feign,  
Pour out your blessing on us plenteously,  
And happy influence upon us rain,

That we may raise a large posterity,  
Which from the earth, which they may long possess  
With lasting happiness,  
Up to your haughty palaces may mount,  
And for the guerdon of their glorious merit,  
May heavenly tabernacles there inherit,  
Of blessed saints for to increase the count.  
So let us rest, sweet love, in hope of this,  
And cease till then our timely joys to sing:  
The woods no more us answer, nor our echo ring!

*Song, made in lieu of many ornaments  
With which my love should duly have been decked,  
Which cutting off through hasty accidents,  
Ye would not stay your due time to expect,  
But promised both to recompense,  
Be unto her a goodly ornament,  
And for short time an endless monument!*

REPRESENTATIVE  
ENGLISH AND AMERICAN  
SONNETS

*Arranged According to the Birth Dates  
of the Poets*



REPRESENTATIVE  
ENGLISH AND AMERICAN  
SONNETS

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTRARIOUS  
PASSIONS IN A LOVER

I find no peace, and all my war is done;  
I fear and hope, I burn, and freeze like ice;  
I fly above the wind, yet can I not arise;  
And nought I have, and all the world I seize on,  
That loseth nor locketh, holdeth me in prison,  
And holdeth me not, yet can I escape no wise;  
Nor letteth me live, nor die, at my devise,  
And yet of death it giveth me occasion.  
Without eye I see; and without tongue I plain:  
I desire to perish, and yet I ask health;  
I love another, and thus I hate myself;  
I feed me in sorrow, and laugh in all my pain.  
Likewise displeaseth me both death and life,  
And my delight is causer of this strife.

*Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542)*

## DESCRIPTION OF SPRING

The sootè season that bud and bloom forth brings,  
With green hat clad the hill, and eke the vale.  
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;  
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.  
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,  
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale,  
The buck in brake his winter coat he slings;  
The fishes fleet with new repaired scale;  
The adder all her slough away she slings;  
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale,  
The busy bee her honey now she mings,  
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.  
And thus I see among these pleasant things  
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs!

*Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-1547)*

SET ME WHEREAS THE SUN DOTH  
PARCH THE GREEN

Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green,  
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice,  
In temperate heat where he is felt and seen;  
In presence prest of people, mad or wise;  
Set me in high or yet in low degree,  
In longest night or in the shortest day,  
In clearest sky or where clouds thickest be,  
In lusty youth or when my hairs are gray.  
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell;  
In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood;  
Thrall or at large, alive whereso I dwell,  
Sick or in health, in evil fame or good:  
Hers will I be, and only with this thought  
Content myself although my chance be nought.

*Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey*

## NEWS FROM THE HEAVENS!

News from the heavens! All wars are at an end!  
'Twixt Higher Powers a happy Peace concluded.  
Fortune and Faith are sworn each other's friend;  
And Love's desire shall never be deluded!  
Time hath set down the compass of his course;  
Nature, her work; and Excellence, her art;  
Care, his content; and Cruelty, his curse;  
Labor, his desire; and Honor, his desert.  
Words shall be deeds; and Men shall be divine!  
Women, all Saints, or Angels in degrees!  
Clouds shall away! The sun shall ever shine!  
Heavens shall have power to hinder none of these!  
These are the Articles of the Conclusion;  
Which, when they fall, then look for a confusion!

*Nicholas Breton (1545-1626)*

IN TIME THE STRONG AND STATELY  
TURRETS FALL

In time the strong and stately turrets fall,  
In time the rose and silver lilies die,  
In time the monarchs captive are, and thrall,  
In time the sea and rivers are made dry;  
The hardest flint in time doth melt asunder;  
Still-living fame in time doth fade away;  
The mountains proud we see in time come under;  
And earth, for age, we see in time decay.  
The sun in time forgets for to retire  
From out the east where he was wont to rise;  
The basest thoughts we see in time aspire,  
And greedy minds in time do wealth despise.  
Thus all, sweet fair, in time must have an end,  
Except thy beauty, virtues, and thy friend.

*Giles Fletcher (1549-1611)*

## FAREWELL TO THE COURT

Like truthless dreams, so are my joys expired;  
And past return are all my dandled days!  
My love, misled; and fancy, quite retired:  
Of all which past, the sorrow only stays!  
My lost delights, now clean from sight of land,  
Have left me all alone in unknown ways.  
My mind, to woe; my life in Fortune's hand:  
Of all which past the sorrows only stays!  
As in a country strange, without companion,  
I only wail the wrong of Death's delays!  
Whose sweet Spring spent, whose Summer well-nigh is  
done:  
Of all which past, the sorrow only stays.  
Whom care forewarns, ere age or Winter's cold,  
To haste me hence, to find my fortune's fold!

*Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618)*

## THE HERMIT

Like to a hermit poor, in place obscure,  
I mean to spend my days of endless doubt!  
To wail such woes as time cannot recure!  
Where none but Love shall ever find me out.  
My food shall be of care and sorrow made.  
My drink nought else but tears fall'n from mine eyes.  
And for my light, in such obscured shade,  
The flames shall serve, which from my heart arise.  
A Gown of grey my body shall attire,  
My Staff, of broken hope, whereon I'll stay.  
Of late repentance, linked with long desire,  
The Couch is framed; whereon my limbs I'll lay.  
And at my Gate, Despair shall linger still,  
To let in Death; when Love and Fortune will.

*Sir Walter Raleigh*

# TWELVE SONNETS

BY

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

(1554-1586)

## MY TRUE LOVE HATH MY HEART AND I HAVE HIS

My true love hath my heart and I have his,  
By just exchange one for the other given.  
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss;  
There never was a better bargain driven.  
His heart in me keeps me and him in one;  
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides;  
He loves my heart, for once it was his own;  
I cherish his, because in me it bides.  
His heart his wound received from my sight;  
My heart was wounded with his wounded heart;  
For as from me on him his hurt did light  
So still methought in me his hurt did smart:  
Both equal hurt, in this change sought our bliss;  
My true love hath my heart and I have his.

*from* ASTROPHEL AND STELLA

## I

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,  
 That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,—  
 Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her  
 know,

Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,—  
 I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe;  
 Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,  
 Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow  
 Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned  
 brain.

But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay;  
 Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;  
 And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.  
 Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,  
 Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite;  
 "Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and  
 write."

## 2

Some lovers speak, when they their muses entertain,  
 Of hopes begot by fear, of wot not what desires,  
 Of force of heavenly beams infusing hellish pain,  
 Of living deaths, dear wounds, fair storms, and freezing  
 fires;

Some one his song in Jove and Jove's strange tales attires,  
 Bordered with bulls and swans, powdered with golden rain;  
 Another humbler wit to Shepherd's pipe retires,  
 Yet hiding royal blood full oft in rural vein;  
 To some a sweetest plaint a sweetest style affords,  
 While tears pour out his ink, and sighs breathe out his  
 words,

His paper pale despair, and pain his pen doth move.  
 I can speak what I feel, and feel as much as they,  
 But think that all the map of my state I display

~~When trembling voice brings forth that I do Stella lov~~

Your words, my friend (right healthful caustics), blame  
My young mind marred, whom Love doth windlass so;  
That mine own writings, like bad servants, show  
My wits quick in vain thoughts, in virtue lame;  
That Plato I read for nought but if he tame  
Such coltish years; that to my birth I owe  
Nobler desires, lest else that friendly foe,  
Great expectation, wear a train of shame:  
For since mad March great promise made of me,  
If now the May of my years much decline,  
What can be hoped my harvest time will be?  
Sure, you say well, "Your wisdom's golden mine  
Dig deep with Learning's spade." Now tell me this—  
Hath this world aught so fair as Stella is?

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!  
How silently, and with how wan a face!  
What, may it be that even in heavenly place  
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?  
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes  
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case:  
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace,  
To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.  
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,  
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?  
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?  
Do they above love to be loved, and yet  
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?  
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,  
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,  
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,  
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low;  
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease  
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:  
O make in me those civil wars to cease;  
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.  
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,  
A chamber deaf of noise and blind of light,  
A rosy garland and a weary head:  
And if these things, as being thine in right,  
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,  
Livelier then elsewhere, Stella's image see.

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance  
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,  
Both by the judgment of the English eyes  
And of some sent from that sweet enemy France;  
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,  
Town folks my strength; a daintier judge applies  
His praise too slight which from good use doth rise,  
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;  
Others, because of both sides I do take  
My blood from them who did excell in this,  
Think Nature me a man-at-arms did make.  
How far they shot awry! the true cause is,  
Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face  
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

Because I breathe not love to every one,  
Nor do not use set colors for to wear,  
Nor nourish special locks of vowèd hair,  
Nor give each speech a full point of a groan,  
The courtly nymphs, acquainted with the moan  
Of them who in their lips Love's standard bear,  
What, he! say they of me, Now I dare swear  
He cannot love; no, no, let him alone.  
And think so still, so Stella know my mind;  
Profess indeed I do not Cupid's art;  
But you, fair maids, at length this true shall find,  
That his right badge is but worn in the heart;  
Dumb swans, not chattering pies, do lovers prove;  
They love indeed who quake to say they love.

O grammar rules, O now your virtues show;  
So children still read you with awful eyes,  
As my young dove may, in your precepts wise,  
Her grant to me by her own virtue know;  
For late, with heart most high, with eyes most low,  
I craved the thing which ever she denies;  
She, lightning Love displaying Venus' skies,  
Lest once should not be heard, twice said, No, No!  
Sing then, my muse, now Iō Pæan sing;  
Heavens envy not at my high triumphing,  
But grammar's force with sweet success confirm;  
For grammar says,—oh, this, dear Stella, weigh,—  
For grammar says,—to grammar who says nay?—  
That in one speech two negatives affirm!

## DESIRE

Thou blind man's mark, thou fool's self-chosen snare,  
Fond fancy's scum, and dregs of scattered thought;  
Band of all evils, cradle of causeless care;  
Thou web of will, whose end is never wrought;  
Desire, desire! I have too dearly bought,  
With price of mangled mind, thy worthless ware;  
Too long, too long, asleep thou hast me brought,  
Who should my mind to higher things prepare.  
But yet in vain thou hast my ruin sought;  
In vain thou madest me to vain things aspire;  
In vain thou kindlest all thy smoky fire;  
For virtue hath this better lesson taught,—  
Within myself to seek my only hire,  
Desiring nought but how to kill desire.

## LOVE

Leave me, O Love! which reachest but to dust;  
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things:  
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;  
What ever fades, but fading pleasure brings.  
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might  
To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be,  
Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light,  
That doth both shine, and give us sight to see.  
O take fast hold! let that light be thy guide,  
In this small course, which birth draws out to death,  
And think how ill becometh him to slide,  
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.  
Then farewell, World, thy uttermost I see,  
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in Me!

O SWEET WOODS

O sweet woods, the delight of solitariness!  
Oh, how much I do like your solitariness!  
Here nor treason is hid, veiled in innocence,  
Nor envy's snaky eye finds any harbor here,  
Nor flatterers' venomous insinuations,  
Nor coming humorists' puddled opinions,  
Nor courteous ruin of proffered usury,  
Nor time prattled away, cradle of ignorance,  
Nor causeless duty, nor cumber of arrogance,  
Nor trifling title of vanity dazzleth us,  
Nor golden manacles stand for a paradise,  
Here wrong's name is unheard, slander a monster is;  
Keep thy sprite from abuse, here no abuse doth haunt.  
What man grafts in a tree dissimulation?

CAELICA, I OVERNIGHT WAS FINELY USED

Caelica, I overnight was finely used,  
Lodged in the midst of paradise, your heart;  
Kind thoughts had charge I might not be refused,  
Of every fruit and flower I had part.  
But curious knowledge, blown with busy flame,  
The sweetest fruits had in down shadows hidden,  
And for it found mine eyes had seen the same,  
I from my paradise was straight forbidden.  
Where that cur, rumor, runs in every place,  
Barking with care, begotten out of fear;  
And glassy honor, tender of disgrace,  
Stand seraphim to see I come not there;  
While that fine soil which all these joys did yield,  
By broken fence is proved a common field.

*Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (1554-1628)*

## THE EARTH WITH THUNDER TORN

The earth with thunder torn, with fire blasted,  
With waters drowned, with windy palsy shaken,  
Cannot for this with heaven be distasted,  
Since thunder, rain, and winds from earth are taken;  
Man torn with love, with inward furies blasted,  
Drowned with despair, with fleshly lustings shaken,  
Cannot for this with heaven be distasted;  
Love, fury, lustings out of man are taken.  
Then, man, endure thyself, those clouds will vanish;  
Life is a top which whipping sorrow driveth;  
Wisdom must bear what our flesh cannot banish.  
The humble lead, the stubborn bootless striveth.  
Or, man, forsake thyelf, to heaven turn thee,  
Her flames enlighten nature, never burn thee.

*Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*

THE NURSE-LIFE WHEAT WITHIN HIS  
GREEN HUSK GROWING

The nurse-life wheat within his green husk growing,  
Flatters our hope and tickles our desire,  
Nature's true riches in sweet beauties showing,  
Which sets all hearts with labor's loves on fire.  
No less fair is the wheat when golden ear  
Shows unto hope the joys of near enjoying:  
Fair and sweet is the bud, more sweet and fair  
The rose, which proves that time is not destroying.  
Caelica, your youth, the morning of delight,  
Enameled o'er with beauties white and red,  
All sense and thoughts did to belief invite,  
That love and glory there are brought to bed;  
And your ripe years love none; he goes no higher;  
Turns all the spirits of man into desire.

*Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*

CUPID, MY LITTLE BOY, COME HOME AGAIN

"Cupid, my little boy, come home again,  
I do not blame thee for thy running hence,  
Where thou found'st nothing but desire's pain,  
Jealousy, with self-unworthiness, offence."

"Alas! I cannot, sir, I am made lame;  
I light no sooner in sweet Myra's eyes,  
(Whence I thought joy and pleasure took their name)  
But my right wing of wanton passion dies.  
And I, poor child, am here instead of play,  
So whipped and scourged with modesty and truth,  
As having lost all hope to 'scape away  
I yet take pleasure to 'tice hither youth:  
That my schoolfellows, plagued as well as I,  
May not make merry when they hear me cry."

*Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*

O PLEASING THOUGHTS

O pleasing thoughts, apprentices of love,  
Forerunners of desire, sweet mithridates  
The poison of my sorrows to remove,  
With whom my hopes and fear full oft debates,—  
Enrich yourselves and me by your self riches  
Which are the thoughts you spend on heaven-bred  
    beauty,  
Rouse you my muse beyond our poets' pitches,  
And working wonders, yet say all is duty;  
Use you no eaglets' eyes nor phoenix' feathers  
To tower the heaven from whence heaven's wonder  
    sallies,  
For why, your sun sings sweetly to her weathers,  
Making a spring of winter in the valleys.  
Show to the world, though poor and scant my skill is,  
How sweet thoughts be that are but thought on Phyllis.  
    *Thomas Lodge (1556?–1625)*

**O SHADY VALES! O FAIR ENRICHED MEADS**

O shady vales! O fair enrichèd meads!  
O sacred woods, sweet fields, and rising mountains!  
O painted flowers, greed herbs where Flora treads,  
Refreshed by wanton winds and watery fountains!  
O all you wingèd choristers of wood,  
That, perched aloft, your former pains report,  
And straight again recount with pleasant mood  
Your present joys in sweet and seemly sort!  
O all you creatures, whosoever thrive  
On mother earth, in seas, by air, by fire!  
More blest are you than I here under sun:  
Love dies in me, whenas he doth revive  
In you: I perish under beauty's ire,  
Where after storms, winds, frosts, your life is won.

*Thomas Lodge*

**AH! WERE SHE PITIFUL AS SHE IS FAIR**

Ah! were she pitiful as she is fair,  
Or but as mild as she is seeming so,  
Then were my hopes greater than my despair—  
Then all the world were heaven, nothing woe.  
Ah! were her heart relenting as her hand,  
That seems to melt e'en with the mildest touch,  
Then knew I where to seat me in a land  
Under the wide heavens, but yet there is none such.  
So, as she shows, she seems the budding rose,  
Yet sweeter far than is an earthly flower:  
Sovereign of beauty, like the spray she grows;  
Compassèd she is with thorns and cankered flower:  
Yet were she willing to be plucked and worn,  
She would be gathered, though she grew on thorn.

*Robert Greene (1560–1592)*

FAIR IS MY LOVE THAT FEEDS AMONG  
THE LILIES

Fair is my love that feeds among the lilies,  
The lilies growing in that pleasant garden  
Where Cupid's mount, that well beloved hill, is,  
And where that little god himself is warden.  
See where my love sits in the beds of spices,  
Beset all round with camphor, myrrh, and roses,  
And interlaced with curious devices,  
Which her from all the world apart encloses.  
There doth she tune her lute for her delight,  
And with sweet music makes the ground to move,  
Whilst I (poor I) do sit in heavy plight,  
Wailing alone my unrespected love;  
Not daring rush into so rare a place,  
That gives to her and she to it a grace.

*Bartholomew Griffen (d. 1602)*

## FLY TO HER HEART

Fly to her heart, hover about her heart,  
With dainty kisses mollify her heart,  
Pierce with thy arrows her obdurate heart,  
With sweet allurements ever move her heart,  
At mid-day and at midnight touch her heart,  
Be lurking closely, nestle about her heart,  
With power (thou art a god) command her heart,  
Kindle thy coals of love about her heart,  
Yea, even into thyself transform her heart.  
Ah, she must love! Be sure thou have her heart,  
And I must die if thou have not her heart,  
Thy bed, if thou rest well, must be her heart,  
He hath the best part sure that hath the heart.  
What have I not, if I have but her heart!

*Bartholomew Griffen*

## VENUS, AND YOUNG ADONIS SITTING BY HER

Venus, and young Adonis sitting by her,  
 Under a myrtle shade began to woo him;  
 She told the youngling how god Mars did try her,  
 And as he fell to her, so fell she to him.  
 "Even thus," quoth she, "the wanton god embraced me!"  
 And then she clasped Adonis in her arms.  
 "Even thus," quoth she, "the warlike god unlaced me!"  
 As if the boy should use like loving charms.  
 But he, a wayward boy, refused the offer  
 And ran away, the beauteous queen neglecting;  
 Showing both folly to abuse her proffer  
 And all his sex of cowardice detecting.  
 O that I had my mistress at that bay,  
 To kiss and clip me till I ran away!

*Bartholomew Griffen*

## CARE-CHARMER SLEEP

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,  
 Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,  
 Relieve my languish, and restore the light;  
 With dark forgetting of my care return.  
 And let the day be time enough to mourn  
 The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:  
 Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,  
 Without the torment of the night's untruth.  
 Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,  
 To model forth the passions of the morrow;  
 Never let rising Sun approve you liars,  
 To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow:  
 Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,  
 And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

*Samuel Daniel (1562-1619)*

THEY SAY THAT SHADOWS OF  
DECEASED GHOSTS

They say that shadows of deceased ghosts  
Do haunt the houses and the graves about,  
Of such whose lives'—lamp went untimely out,  
Delighting still in their forsaken hosts:  
So in the place where cruel Love did shoot  
The fatal shaft that slew my love's delight,  
I stalk and walk and wander day and night,  
Even like a ghost with unperceived foot.  
But those light ghosts are happier far than I,  
For at their pleasure they can come and go  
Unto the place that hides their treasure, so,  
And see the same with their fantastic eye:  
Where I, alas! dare not approach the cruel  
Proud monument that doth enclose my jewel.

*Joshua Sylvester (1563–1618)*

## A WITLESS GALLANT

A witless gallant, a young wench that wooed  
(Yet his dull spirit her not one jot could move),  
Entreated me, as e'er I wished his good  
To write him but one sonnet to his love;  
When I, as fast as e'er my pen could trot,  
Poured out what first from quick invention came,  
Nor never stood one word thereof to blot,  
Much like his wit, that was to use the same;  
But with my verses he his mistress won,  
Who doted on the dolt beyond all measure.  
But see, for you to heaven for phrase I run,  
And ransack all Apollo's golden treasure;  
Yet by my froth this fool his love obtains,  
And I lose you for all my wit and pains.

*Michael Drayton (1563–1631)*

SINCE THERE'S NO HELP, COME LET  
US KISS AND PART

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part;  
Nay I have done, you get no more of me,  
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,  
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;  
Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows,  
And when we meet at any time again,  
Be it not seen in either of our brows  
That we one jot of former love retain.  
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,  
When his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,  
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,  
And Innocence is closing up his eyes:  
Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,  
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

*Michael Drayton*

## AN ENIGMA OF SLEEP

Life is myself, I keep the life of all;  
Without my help all living things they die;  
Small, great, poor, rich, obey unto my call,  
Fierce lions, fowls, and whales into the sea.  
With meat and drink the hungry I supply;  
Dead drunken, all I quicken new again;  
Dearer to kings nor crowns and scepters high;  
Unto the rich, nor all their wealth and gain.  
I am not nice; the poor I'll not disdain,  
Poor wretches more than kings may me command.  
Where I come in, all senses man refrain;  
Softer nor silk, and sadder nor the sand,  
I hurt, I help, I slay, and cure the same;  
Sleep, and advise, and pence well what I am.

*King James (1566-1625)*

THRICE TOSS THESE OAKEN ASHES  
IN THE AIR

Thrice toss these oaken ashes in the air,  
Thrice sit thou mute in this enchanted chair,  
Then thrice three times tie up this true love's knot,  
And murmur soft, She will, or she will not.  
Go burn these poisonous weeds in yon blue fire,  
These screech-owl's feathers and this prickling brier,  
This cypress gathered at a dead man's grave,  
That all thy fears and cares an end may have.  
Then come, you fairies, dance with me a round;  
Melt her hard heart with your melodious sound.  
In vain are all the charms I can devise:  
She hath an art to break them with her eyes.

*Thomas Campion (1567-1619)*

AH SWEET CONTENT, WHERE IS THY  
MILD ABODE?

Ah sweet content, where is thy mild abode?  
Is it with shepherds and light-hearted swains  
Which sing upon the downs and pipe abroad,  
Tending their flocks and cattle on the plains?  
Ah, sweet content, where dost thou safely rest?  
In heaven, with angels? which the praises sing  
Of him that made, and rules at his behest,  
The minds and hearts of every living thing.  
Ah, sweet content, where doth thine harbor hold?  
Is it in churches, with religious men  
Which please the gods with prayers manifold,  
And in their studies meditate it then?  
Whether thou dost in heaven or earth appear,  
Be where thou wilt, thou wilt not harbor here!

*Barnabe Barnes (1569-1609)*

## A BLAST OF WIND, A MOMENTARY BREATH

A blast of wind, a momentary breath,  
 A watery bubble symbolized with air,  
 A sun-blown rose, but for a season fair,  
 A ghostly glance, a skeleton of death;  
 A morning dew, pearling the grass beneath,  
 Whose moisture sun's appearance doth impair;  
 A lightning glimpse, a muse of thought and care,  
 A planet's shot, a shade which followeth,  
 A voice which vanisheth so soon as heard,  
 The thriftless heir of time, a rolling wave,  
 A show, no more in action than regard,  
 A mass of dust, world's momentary slave,—  
 Is man, in state of our old Adam made,  
 Soon born to die, soon flourishing to fade.

*Barnabe Barnes*

## MY FAGGOT AND MY PIPE

Forsaken of all comforts but these two,  
 My faggot and my pipe, I sit and muse  
 On all my crosses, and almost accuse  
 The heavens for dealing with me as they do.  
 Then Hope steps in, and with a smiling brow  
 Such cheerful expectations doth infuse  
 As make me think ere long I cannot choose  
 But be some grandee, whatsoe'er I'm now.  
 But having spent my pipe, I then perceive  
 That hopes and dreams are cousins, both deceive.  
 Then make I this conclusion in my mind,  
 'Tis all one thing—both tend unto one scope—  
 To live upon tobacco and on hope:  
 The one's but smoke, the other is but wind.

*Sir Robert Aytoun (1570–1638)*

# ELEVEN HOLY SONNETS

BY

JOHN DONNE

(1573-1631)

Thou hast made me, and shall Thy work decay?  
Repair me now, for now mine end doth haste,  
I run to death, and death meets me as fast,  
And all my pleasures are like yesterday;  
I dare not move my dim eyes any way,  
Despair behind, and death before doth cast  
Such terror, and my feeble flesh doth waste  
By sin in it, which it towards hell doth weigh;  
Only Thou art above, and when towards Thee  
By Thy leave I can look, I rise again;  
But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,  
That not one hour myself I can sustain;  
Thy grace may wing me to prevent his art,  
And thou like adamant draw mine iron heart.

## 2

O, might those sighs and tears return again  
Into my breast and eyes, which I have spent,  
That I might in this holy discontent  
Mourn with some fruit, as I have mourned in vain;  
In mine idolatry what showers of rain  
Mine eyes did waste? what griefs my heart did rent?  
That sufferance was my sin; now I repent;  
'Cause I did suffer I must suffer pain.  
Th' hydroptic drunkard, and night-scouting thief,  
The itchy lecher, and self-tickling proud  
Have the remembrance of past joys, for relief  
Of coming ills. To poor me is allowed  
No ease; for long yet vehement grief hath been  
Th' effect and cause, the punishment and sin.

## 3

I am a little world made cunningly  
Of elements and an angelic sprite;  
But black sin hath betrayed to endless night  
My world's both parts, and, O, both parts must die.  
You which beyond that heaven which was most high  
Have found new spheres, and of new land can write,  
Pour new seas in my eyes, so that I might  
Drown my world with my weeping earnestly,  
Or wash it if it must be drowned no more.  
But O, it must be burnt; alas; the fire  
Of lust and envy burnt it heretofore,  
And made it fouler; let their flames retire,  
And burn me, O Lord, with a fiery zeal  
Of Thee and Thy house, which doth in eating heal.

## 4

This is my play's last scene, here heavens appoint  
My pilgrimage's last mile; and my race  
Idly, yet quickly run, hath this last pace,  
My span's last inch, my minute's latest point,  
And gluttonous death will instantly unjoint  
My body and soul, and I shall sleep a space,  
But my ever-waking part shall see that face,  
Whose fear already shakes my every joint:  
Then, as my soul to heaven her first seat takes flight,  
And earth-born body, in the earth shall dwell,  
So, fall my sins, that all may have their right,  
To where they 're bred, and would press me, to hell.  
Impute me righteous, thus purged of evil,  
For thus I leave the world, the flesh, the devil.

## 5

At the round earth's imagined corners, blow  
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise  
From death, you numberless infinities  
Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go,  
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,  
All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,  
Despair, law, chance, hath slain, and you whose eyes,  
Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.  
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space,  
For, if above all these, my sins abound,  
'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,  
When we are there; here on this lowly ground,  
Teach me how to repent; for that 's as good  
As if Thou hadst sealed my pardon, with Thy blood.

## 6

If poisonous minerals, and if that tree,  
Whose fruit threw death on else immortal us,  
If lecherous goats, if serpents envious  
Cannot be damned, alas! why should I be?  
Why should intent or reason, born in me,  
Make sins, else equal, in me more heinous?  
And mercy being easy, and glorious  
To God, in His stern wrath, why threatens He?  
But who am I, that dare dispute with Thee  
O God? Oh! of thine only worthy blood,  
And my tears, make a heavenly Lethean flood.  
And drown in it my sin's black memory;  
That Thou remember them, some claim as debt,  
I think it mercy, if Thou wilt forget.

## 7

Death be not proud, though some have callèd thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so,  
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,  
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.  
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,  
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,  
And soonest our best men with thee do go,  
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.  
Thou art slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,  
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,  
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,  
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

## 8

Why are we by all creatures waited on?  
Why do the prodigal elements supply  
Life and food to me, being more pure than I,  
Simple, and further from corruption?  
Why brook'st thou, ignorant horse, subjection?  
Why dost thou, bull, and boar, so sillily  
Dissemble weakness, and by one man's stroke die,  
Whose whole kind you might swallow and feed upon?  
Weaker I am, woe is me, and worse than you,  
You have not sinned, nor need be timorous.  
But wonder at a greater wonder, for to us  
Created nature doth these things subduc,  
But their Creator, whom sin, nor nature tied,  
For us, His creatures, and His foes, hath died.

## 9

Batter my heart, three-personed God; for you  
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;  
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend  
Your force, to break, blow, burn and make me new.  
I, like an usurped town, to another due,  
Labor to admit you, but O, to no end,  
Reason your viceroy in me, me should defend,  
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.  
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,  
But am betrothed unto your enemy:  
Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,  
Take me to you, imprison me, for I  
Except you enthal me, never shall be free,  
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

## 10

Since she whom I loved hath paid her last debt  
To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,  
And her soul early into heaven ravishèd,—  
Wholly on heavenly things my mind is set.  
Here the admiring her my mind did whet  
To seek Thee, God; so streams do show their head,  
But though I have found Thee, and Thou my thirst hast  
fed,

A holy thirsty dropsy melts me yet.  
But why should I beg more love, whenas Thou  
Dost woo my soul for hers, offering all Thine?  
And dost not only fear lest I allow  
My love to saints and angels, things divine,  
But in Thy tender jealousy dost doubt  
Lest the world, flesh, yea devil, put Thee out?

## 11

Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one;  
Inconstancy unnaturally hath begot  
A constant habit; that when I would not  
I change in vows, and in devotion.  
As humorous is my contrition  
As my profane love, and as soon forgot:  
As riddlingly distempered, cold and hot,  
As praying, as mute; as infinite, as none.  
I durst not view heaven yesterday; and to day  
In prayers and flattering speeches I court God:  
To-morrow I quake with true fear of His rod.  
So my devout fits come and go away  
Like a fantastic ague: save that here  
Those are my best days, when I shake with fear.

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST

The last and greatest herald of heaven's King  
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild,  
Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,  
Which he more harmless found than man, and mild.  
His food was locusts, and what there doth spring,  
With honey that from virgin lives distilled;  
Parched body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing  
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.  
There burst he forth: All ye whose hopes rely  
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn,  
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn!  
—Who listened to his voice, obeyed his cry?  
Only the echoes, which he made relent,  
Rung from their flinty caves, Repent! Repent!

*William Drummond (1585–1649)*

DOWN IN A VALLEY, BY A FOREST'S SIDE

Down in a valley, by a forest's side,  
Near where the crystal Thames rolls on her waves,  
I saw a mushroom stand in haughty pride,  
As if the lilies grew to be his slaves.  
The gentle daisy, with her silver crown,  
Worn in the breast of many a shepherd's lass;  
The humble violet, that lowly down  
Salutes the gay nymphs as they trimly pass;  
These with a many more, methought, complained  
That nature should those needless things produce,  
Which not alone, the sun from others gained,  
But turn it wholly to their proper use.  
I could not choose but grieve that nature made  
So glorious flowers to live in such a shade.

*William Browne (1588–1643)*

# ELEVEN SONNETS

BY

JOHN MILTON

(1608-1674)

## TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray  
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,  
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,  
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.  
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,  
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,  
Portend success in love. O if Jove's will  
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,  
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate  
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;  
As thou from year to year hast sung too late  
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.  
Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,  
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

### ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!  
My hasting days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.  
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth  
That I to manhood am arrived so near;  
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,  
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.  
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be still in strictest measure even  
To that same lot, however mean or high,  
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of **Heaven**;  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

### ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON MY WRITING CERTAIN TREATISES

I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs  
By the known rules of ancient liberty,  
When straight a barbarous noise environs me  
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs;  
As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs  
Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,  
Which after held the sun and moon in fee.  
But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,  
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,  
And still revolt when truth would set them free.  
License they mean when they cry Liberty;  
For who loves that must first be wise and good:  
But from that mark how far they rove we see,  
For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATH-  
ERINE THOMSON, MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND,  
DECEASED 16TH OF DECEMBER, 1646.

When faith and love, which parted from thee never,  
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with god,  
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load  
Of death, called life; which us from life doth sever.  
Thy works and alms and all thy good endeavor  
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod:  
But as Faith pointed with her golden rod,  
Followed thee up to joy and bliss forever.  
Love led them on, and faith who knew them best,  
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams  
And azure wings, that up they flew so dressed  
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes  
Before the Judge: who thenceforth bid thee rest,  
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

TO THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX

Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings!  
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,  
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze  
And rumors loud, that daunt remotest kings:  
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings  
Victory home, though new rebellions raise  
Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays  
Her broken league, to imp their serpent wings.  
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand,  
(For what can war but endless war still breed?)  
Till truth and right from violence be freed,  
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand  
Of public fraud. In vain doth valor bleed,  
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

## TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud  
Not of war only, but detractions rude,  
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,  
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plowed,  
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud  
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,  
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,  
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,  
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains  
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories  
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,  
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.  
Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

## ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;  
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,  
Forget not: in thy book record their groans  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled  
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans  
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow  
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway  
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow  
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,  
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

## ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest he returning chide;  
“Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?”  
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need  
Either man’s work or his own gifts. Who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,  
And post o’er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait.”

## TO CYRIACK SKINNER

Cyriack, this three years’ day these eyes, though clear  
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,  
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;  
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear  
Of sun or moon or star throughout the year,  
Or man or woman. Yet I argue not  
Against Heaven’s hand or will, nor bate a jot  
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer  
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?  
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied  
In liberty’s defence, my noble task,  
Of which all Europe talks from side to side.  
This thought might lead me through the world’s vain  
mask  
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

## TO MR. LAWRENCE

Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son,  
Now that the fields are dank and ways are mire,  
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire  
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won  
From the hard season gaining? Time will run  
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire  
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire  
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.  
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,  
Of Attic taste, with wine whence we may rise  
To hear the lute well touched or artful voice  
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?  
He who of those delights can judge, and spare  
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

## ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

Methought I saw my late espoused saint  
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,  
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,  
Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.  
Mine as whom washed from spot of childbed taint  
Purification in the old Law did save,  
And such as yet once more I trust to have  
Full sight of her in heaven without restraint,  
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.  
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight,  
Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined  
So clear, as in no face with more delight:  
But O! as to embrace me she inclined,  
I waked; she fled, and day brought back my night.

## CONCERNING FOUR RURAL SISTERS

## 1

Alice is tall and upright as a pine,  
White as blanced almonds or the falling snow,  
Sweet as are damask roses when they blow,  
And doubtless fruitful as the swelling vine.  
Ripe to be cut and ready to be pressed,  
Her full-cheeked beauties very well appear;  
And a year's fruit she loses every year,  
Wanting a man to improve her to the best.  
Full fain she would be husbanded, and yet,  
Alas! she cannot a fit laborer get  
To cultivate her to her own content:  
Fain would she be, God wot, about her task,  
And yet, forsooth, she is too proud to ask,  
And, which is worse, too modest to consent.

## 2

Margaret of humbler stature by the head  
Is, as it oft falls out with yellow hair,  
Than her fair sister, yet so much more fair,  
As her pure white is better mixed with red.  
This, hotter than the other ten to one,  
Longs to be put unto her mother's trade,  
And loud proclaims she lives too long a maid,  
Wishing for one to untie her virgin zone.  
She finds virginity a kind of ware  
That's very very troublesome to bear,  
And being gone, she thinks will ne'er be missed;  
And yet withal, the girl has so much grace,  
To call for help I know she wants the face,  
Though asked, I know not how she would resist.

## 3

Mary is black, and taller than the last,  
Yet equal in perfection and desire,  
To the one's melting snow, and t' other's fire,  
As with whose black their fairness is defaced.  
She pants as much for love as the other two,  
But she so virtuous is, or else so wise,  
That she will win (or will not love) a prize,  
And but upon good terms will never do:  
Therefore who her will conquer ought to be  
At least as full of love and wit as she,  
Or he shall ne'er find favor at her hands;  
Nay, though he have a pretty store of brains,  
Shall only have his labor for his pains,  
Unless he offer more than she demands.

## 4

Martha is not so tall, nor yet so fair  
As any of the other lovely three,  
Her chiefest grace is poor simplicity;  
Yet were the rest away, she were a star.  
She's fair enough, only she wants the art  
To set her beauties off as they can do,  
And that's the cause she ne'er heard any woo,  
Nor ever yet made conquest of a heart:  
And yet her blood's as boiling as the best,  
Which, pretty soul, does so disturb her rest,  
And makes her languish so, she's fit to die.  
Poor thing, I doubt she still must lie alone,  
For being like to be attacked by none,  
She's no more wit to ask than to deny.

*Charles Cotton (1630-1687)*

## ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD WEST

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,  
And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:  
The birds in vain their amorous descant join;  
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:  
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;  
A different object do these eyes require:  
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;  
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.  
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,  
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men:  
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear:  
To warm their little loves the birds complain:  
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,  
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

*Thomas Gray (1716-1771)*

## TO MARY UNWIN

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,  
Such aid from Heaven as some have feigned they drew,  
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new  
And undebased by praise of meaner things,  
That ere through age or woe I shed my wings  
I may record thy worth with honor due,  
In verse as musical as thou art true,  
And that immortalizes whom it sings:—  
But thou hast little need. There is a Book  
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,  
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,  
A chronicle of actions just and bright—  
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine;  
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

*William Cowper (1731-1800)*

## TO THE EVENING STAR

Thou fair-haired angel of the evening,  
Now, whilst the sun rests on the mountain, light  
Thy brilliant torch of love; thy radiant crown  
Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!  
Smile on our loves; and whilst thou drawest round  
The curtains of the sky, scatter thy dew  
On every flower that closes its sweet eyes  
In timely sleep. Let thy west wind sleep on  
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,  
And wash the dusk with silver. Soon, full soon  
Dost thou withdraw; then the wolf rages wide,  
And then the lion glares through the dun forest.  
The fleeces of our flocks are covered with  
Thy sacred dew: protect them with thine influence.

*William Blake (1757-1827)*

## TO OXFORD

Oxford, since late I left thy peaceful shore,  
Much I regret thy domes with turrets crowned,  
Thy crested walls with twining ivy bound,  
Thy Gothic fanes, dim isles, and cloisters hoar,  
And treasured rolls of Wisdom's ancient lore;  
Nor less thy varying bells, which hourly sound  
In pensive chime, or ring in lively round,  
Or toll in the slow curfew's solemn roar;  
Much too thy moonlight walks, and musings grave  
Mid silent shades of high-embowering trees,  
And much thy Sister-Streams, whose willows wave  
In whispering cadence to the evening breeze;  
But most those friends, whose much-loved converse gave  
Thy gentle charms a tenfold power to please.

*Thomas Russell (1762-1788)*

# TWENTY-EIGHT SONNETS

BY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(1770-1850)

## NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;  
And hermits are contented with their cells;  
And students with their pensive citadels;  
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,  
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,  
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,  
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:  
In truth the prison, unto which we doom  
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,  
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound  
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;  
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)  
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,  
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

## TO SLEEP

A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by,  
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees  
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,  
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky:  
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie  
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies  
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;  
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.  
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,  
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:  
So do not let me wear to-night away:  
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?  
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,  
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

## COMPOSED UPON THE BEACH NEAR CALAIS

AUGUST, 1802

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free:  
The holy time is quiet as a Nun  
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;  
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea.  
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,  
And doth with his eternal motion make  
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.  
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,  
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,  
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:  
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;  
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,  
God being with thee when we know it not.

### WHERE LIES THE LAND TO WHICH YON SHIP MUST GO?

Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?  
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,  
Festively she puts forth in trim array;  
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?  
What boots the enquiry?—Neither friend nor foe  
She cares for; let her travel where she may,  
She finds familiar names, a beaten way  
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.  
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?  
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,  
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there  
Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,  
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,  
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

### THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US (1806)

The world is too much with us: late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

## SCORN NOT THE SONNET

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,  
Mindless of its just honors; with this key  
Shakespeare unlocked his heart: the melody  
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;  
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;  
With it Camoëns soothed an exile's grief;  
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf  
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned  
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,  
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faeryland  
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp  
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand  
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew  
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

NOT LOVE, NOT WAR, NOR THE  
TUMULTUOUS SWELL

Not Love, not War, nor the tumultuous swell  
Of civil conflict, nor the wrecks of change,  
Nor Duty struggling with afflictions strange—  
Not these *alone* inspire the tuneful shell;  
But where untroubled peace and concord dwell,  
There also is the Muse not loth to range,  
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or grange,  
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.  
Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavor  
And sage content, and placid melancholy;  
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river—  
Diaphanous because it travels slowly;  
Soft is the music that would charm forever;  
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.

## COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE,

SEPTEMBER, 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty:  
This City now doth, like a garment, wear  
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!  
The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

## COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS,

AUGUST, 1802

Fair Star of evening, Splendor of the west,  
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink  
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink  
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,  
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest  
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,  
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,  
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest  
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot  
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.  
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,  
One life, one glory!—I, with many a fear  
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,  
Among men who do not love her, linger here

## I GRIEVED FOR BUONAPARTÉ

I grieved for Buonaparté, with a vain  
And an unthinking grief! The tenderest mood  
Of that Man's mind—what can it be? what food  
Fed his first hopes? what knowledge could *he* gain?  
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train  
The Governor who must be wise and good,  
And temper with the sternness of the brain  
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.  
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:  
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk  
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk  
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees  
By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk  
True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN  
REPUBLIC

Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee;  
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth  
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,  
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty.  
She was a maiden city, bright and free;  
No guile seduced, no force could violate;  
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,  
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.  
And what if she had seen those glories fade,  
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;  
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid  
When her long life hath reached its final day:  
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade  
Of that which once was great is passed away.

## TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!  
Whether the whistling rustic tend his plough  
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now  
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—  
O miserable chieftain! where and when  
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou  
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:  
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,  
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind  
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;  
There's not a breathing of the common wind  
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;  
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGA-  
TION OF SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,  
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:  
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,  
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!  
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee  
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:  
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,  
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.  
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:  
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;  
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be  
That mountain floods should thunder as before,  
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,  
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee?

## WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802

O Friend! I know not which way I must look  
For comfort, being, as I am, oppressed,  
To think that now our life is only dressed  
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,  
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook  
In the open sunshine, or we are unbled:  
The wealthiest man among us is the best:  
No grandeur now in nature or in book  
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,  
This is idolatry; and these we adore:  
Plain living and high thinking are no more:  
The homely beauty of the good old cause  
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,  
And pure religion breathing household laws.

## LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:  
England hath need of thee: she is a fen  
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,  
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;  
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;  
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.  
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:  
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:  
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

## IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF

It is not to be thought of that the Flood  
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea  
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity  
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"  
Roused though it be full often to a mood  
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,  
That this most famous stream in bogs and sands  
Should perish; and to evil and to good  
Be lost forever. In our halls is hung  
Armory of the invincible Knights of old:  
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue  
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold  
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung  
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

## OCTOBER 1803

When, looking on the present face of things,  
I see one Man, of men the meanest too!  
Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,  
With mighty Nations for his underlings,  
The great events with which old story rings  
Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing great:  
Nothing is left which I can venerate;  
So that a doubt almost within me springs  
Of Providence, such emptiness at length  
Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God!  
I measure back the steps which I have trod;  
And tremble, seeing whence proceeds the strength  
Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime  
I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

## THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE

The old inventive Poets, had they seen;  
Or rather felt, the entrancement that detains  
Thy waters, Duddon! 'mid these flowery plains;  
The still repose, the liquid lapse serene,  
Transferred to bowers imperishably green,  
Had beautified Elysium! But these chains  
Will soon be broken;—a rough course remains,  
Rough as the past; where Thou, of placid mien,  
Innocuous as a firstling of the flock,  
And countenanced like a soft cerulean sky,  
Shalt change thy temper; and, with many a shock  
Given and received in mutual jeopardy,  
Dance, like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,  
'Tossing her frantic thyrsus wide and high!

EAGLES.—COMPOSED AT DUNOLLY CASTLE  
IN THE BAY OF OBAN

Dishonored Rock and Ruin! that, by law  
Tyranic, keep the Bird of Jove embarred  
Like a lone criminal whose life is spared.  
Vexed is he, and screams loud. The last I saw  
Was on the wing; stooping, he struck with awe  
Man, bird, and beast; then, with a consort paired,  
From a bold headland, their loved aery's guard,  
Flew high above Atlantic waves to draw  
Light from the fountain of the setting sun.  
Such was this Prisoner once; and, when his plumes  
The sea-blast ruffles as the storm comes on,  
Then, for a moment, he, in spirit, resumes  
His rank 'mong freeborn creatures that live free,  
His power, his beauty, and his majesty.

## ON REVISITING DUNOLLY CASTLE

The captive Bird was gone;—to cliff or moor  
Perchance had flown, delivered by the storm;  
Or he had pined, and sunk to feed the worm;  
Him found we not; but, climbing a tall tower,  
There saw, impaved with rude fidelity  
Of art mosaic, in a roofless floor,  
An Eagle with stretched wings, but beamless eye—  
An Eagle that could neither wail nor soar.  
Effigy of the Vanished—(shall I dare  
To call thee so?) or symbol of fierce deeds  
And of the towering courage which past times  
Rejoiced in—take, whate'er thou be, a share  
Not undeserved, of the memorial rhymes  
That animate my way where'er it leads!

## CATHEDRALS, ETC.

Open your gates, ye everlasting Piles!  
Types of the spiritual Church which God hath reared;  
Not loth we quit the newly-hallowed sword  
And humble altar, 'mid your sumptuous aisles  
To kneel, or thrid your intricate defiles,  
Or down the nave to pace in motion slow;  
Watching, with upward eye, the tall tower grow  
And mount, at every step, with living wiles  
Instinct—to rouse the heart and lead the will  
By a bright ladder to the world above.  
Open your gates, ye Monuments of love  
Divine! thou Lincoln, on thy sovereign hill!  
Thou, stately York! and Ye, whose splendors cheer  
Isis and Cam, to patient Science dear!

## THEY DREAMT NOT OF A PERISHABLE HOME

They dreamt not of a perishable home  
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear  
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;  
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam;  
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam  
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath  
Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my path  
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome  
Hath typified by reach of daring art  
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,  
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread  
As now, when She hath also seen her breast  
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part  
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead. .

## "THERE!" SAID A STRIPLING

"There!" said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride  
Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,  
"Is Mosgiel Farm; and that's the very field  
Where Burns plowed up the Daisy." Far and wide  
A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried  
Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;  
And, by that simple notice, the repose  
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.  
Beneath "the random *bield* of clod or stone"  
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower  
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour  
Have passed away; less happy than the One  
That, by the unwilling plowshare, died to prove  
The tender charm of poetry and love.

## PERSONAL TALK

## 1

I am not one who much or oft delight  
To season my fireside with personal talk,—  
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,  
Or neighbors, daily, weekly, in my sight:  
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,  
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,  
These all wear out of me, like forms, with chalk  
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.  
Better than such discourse doth silence long,  
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;  
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,  
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,  
And listen to the flapping of the flame,  
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

## 2

"Yet life," you say, "is life; we have seen and see,  
And with a living pleasure we describe;  
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe  
The languid mind into activity.  
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee  
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."  
Even be it so; yet still among your tribe,  
Our daily world's true worldings, rank not me!  
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies  
More justly balanced; partly at their feet,  
And part far from them: sweetest melodies  
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;  
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,  
He is a slave; the meanest we can meet!

## 3

Wings have we,—and as far as we can go,  
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,  
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood  
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.  
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,  
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:  
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.  
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,  
Matter wherein right voluble I am,  
To which I listen with a ready ear;  
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—  
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;  
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

## 4

Nor can I not believe but that hereby  
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote  
From evil-speaking; rancor, never sought,  
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.  
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I  
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:  
And thus from day to day my little boat  
Rocks in its harbor, lodging peaceably.  
Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,  
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—  
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs  
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!  
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,  
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

## MOST SWEET IT IS

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes  
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,  
While a fair region round the traveller lies  
Which he forbears again to look upon;  
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,  
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone  
Of meditation, slipping in between  
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.  
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day  
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:  
With Thought and Love companions of our way,  
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,  
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dew  
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

## WORK WITHOUT HOPE

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—  
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—  
And Winter slumbering in the open air,  
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!  
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,  
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.  
Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,  
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.  
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,  
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!  
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:  
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?  
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And Hope without an object cannot live.

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)*

WORK

Who first invented work, and bound the free  
And holiday-rejoicing spirit down  
To the ever-haunting importunity  
Of business in the green fields, and the town—  
To plow, loom, anvil, spade—and oh! most sad  
To that dry drudgery at the desk's dry wood?  
Who but the Being unblest, alien from good,  
Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad  
Task ever plies 'mid rotatory burnings,  
That round and round incalculably reel—  
For wrath divine hath made him like a wheel—  
In that red realm from which are no returnings;  
Where toiling and turmoiling ever and aye,  
He and his thoughts keep pensive working-day.

*Charles Lamb (1775-1834)*

TO ROBERT BROWNING

There is delight in singing, though none hear  
Beside the singer; and there is delight  
In praising, though the praiser sit alone  
And see the prais'd far off him, far above.  
Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,  
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,  
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,  
No man hath walked along our roads with step  
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue  
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes  
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze  
Of Alpine highths thou playest with, borne on  
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where  
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

*Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864)*

## THE FISH, THE MAN, AND THE SPIRIT

1. *To a Fish*

You strange, astonished-looking, angle-faced,  
Dreary-mouthed, gaping wretches of the sea,  
Gulping salt-water everlastingly,  
Cold-blooded, though with red your blood be graced,  
And mute, though dwellers in the roaring waste;  
And you, all shapes beside, that fishy be,—  
Some round, some flat, some long, all devilry,  
Legless, unloving, infamously chaste:—  
O scaly, slippery wet, swift, staring wights,  
What is't ye do? What life lead? eh, dull goggles?  
How do ye vary your vile days and nights?  
How pass your Sundays? Are ye still but joggles  
In ceaseless wash? Still nought but gapes and bites,  
And drinks, and stares, diversified with boggles?

2. *A Fish Answers*

Amazing monster! that, for aught I know,  
With the first sight of thee didst make our race  
For ever stare! O flat and shocking face,  
Grimly divided from the breast below!  
Thou that on dry land horribly dost go  
With a split body and most ridiculous pace,  
Prong after prong, disgracer of all grace,  
Long-useless-finned, haired, upright, unwet, slow!  
O breather of the unbreathable, sword-sharp air,  
How canst exist? How bear thyself, thou dry  
And dreary sloth? What particle canst share  
Of the only blessed life, the watery?  
I sometimes see of ye an actual *pair*  
Go by! linked fin by fin! most odiously.

3. *The Fish Turns into a Man, and Then into  
a Spirit, and Again Speaks*

Indulge thy smiling scorn, if smiling still,  
O man! and loathe, but with a sort of love;  
For difference must its use by difference prove,  
And, in sweet clang, the spheres with music fill.  
One of the spirits am I, that at his will  
Live in what'er has life—fish, eagle, dove—  
No hate, no pride, beneath nought, nor above,  
A visitor of the rounds of God's sweet skill.  
Man's life is warm, glad, sad, 'twixt loves and graves,  
Boundless in hope, honored with pang austere,  
Heaven-gazing; and his angel-wing he craves:—  
The fish is swift, small-needing, vague yet clear,  
A cold, sweet silver life, wrapped in round waves,  
Quickened with touches of transporting fear.

*Leigh Hunt (1784-1859)*

THE NILE

It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,  
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream,  
And times and things, as in that vision, seem  
Keeping along it their eternal stands,—  
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands  
That roamed through the young world, the glory  
extreme  
Of high Sesostriis, and that southern beam,  
The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands.  
Then comes a mightier silence, stern and strong,  
As of a world left empty of its throng,  
And the void weighs on us; and then we wake,  
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along  
'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take  
Our own calm journey on for human sake.

*Leigh Hunt*

## OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveller from an antique land .  
Who said, Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"  
Nothing besides remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)*

## ENGLAND IN 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—  
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,—  
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,  
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,  
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—  
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—  
An army, which liberticide and prey  
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield  
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;  
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;  
A Senate,—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—  
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may  
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

## POLITICAL GREATNESS

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,  
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,  
Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame;  
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,  
History is but the shadow of their shame,  
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts  
As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,  
Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery  
Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit  
By force or custom? Man, who man would be,  
Must rule the empire of himself; in it  
Must be supreme, establishing his throne  
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy  
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

## YE HASTEN TO THE GRAVE!

Ye hasten to the grave! What seek ye there,  
Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes  
Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear?  
Oh thou quick heart which pantest to possess  
All that pale expectation feigneth fair!  
Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest guess  
Whence thou didst come, and whither thou must go,  
And all that never yet was known would know—  
Oh, whither hasten ye, that ye thus press,  
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,  
Seeking, alike from happiness and woe,  
A refuge in the cavern of gray death?  
O heart, and mind, and thoughts, what thing do you  
Hope to inherit in the grave below?

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

# FIFTEEN SONNETS

BY

JOHN KEATS

(1795-1821)

## TO MY BROTHERS

Small busy flames play through the fresh-laid coals,  
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep  
Like whispers of the household gods that keep  
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.  
And while for rhymes I search around the poles,  
Your eyes are fixed, as in poetic sleep,  
Upon the lore so voluble and deep,  
That aye at fall of night our care condole.  
This is your birthday, Tom, and I rejoice  
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly:  
Many such eves of gently whispering noise  
May we together pass, and calmly try  
What are this world's true joys,—ere the great voice  
From its fair face shall bid our spirits fly.

## KEEN, FITFUL GUSTS ARE WHISPERING

Keen, fitful gusts are whispering here and there  
Among the bushes, half leafless and dry;  
The stars look very cold about the sky,  
And I have many miles on foot to fare;  
Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,  
Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,  
Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,  
Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair:  
For I am brimful of the friendliness  
That in a little cottage I have found;  
Of fair-haired Milton's eloquent distress,  
And all his love for gentle Lycid drowned,  
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,  
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crowned.

WRITTEN IN DISGUST OF VULGAR  
SUPERSTITION

The church bells toll a melancholy round,  
Calling the people to some other prayers,  
Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,  
More hearkening to the sermon's horrid sound.  
Surely the mind of man is closely bound  
In some black spell; seeing that each one tears  
Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian airs,  
And converse high of those with glory crowned.  
Still, still they toll, and I should feel a damp,—  
A chill as from the tomb, did I not know  
That they are dying like an outburnt lamp:  
That 't is their sighing, wailing ere they go  
Into oblivion;—that fresh flowers will grow  
And many glories of immortal stamp.

## TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY PENT

To one who has been long in city pent,  
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair  
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer  
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.  
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,  
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair  
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair  
And gentle tale of love and languishment?  
Returning home at evening, with an ear  
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye  
Watching the sailing cloudlets' bright career,  
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:  
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear  
That falls through the clear ether silently.

## ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,  
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
Round many western islands have I been  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;  
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:  
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken;  
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

## GREAT SPIRITS NOW ON EARTH ARE SOJOURNING

Great spirits now on earth are sojourning;  
He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,  
Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,  
Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing:  
He of the rose, the violet, the spring,  
The social smile, the chain for Freedom' sake:  
And lo!—whose steadfastness would never take  
A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.  
And other spirits there are standing apart  
Upon the forehead of the age to come;  
These, these will give the world another heart,  
And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum  
Of mighty workings?—  
Listen awhile ye nations, and be dumb.

## ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES

My spirit is too weak—mortality  
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,  
And each imagined pinnacle and steep  
Of godlike hardship, tells me I must die  
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.  
Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep  
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,  
Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.  
Such dim-conceivèd glories of the brain  
Bring round the heart an indescribable feud;  
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,  
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude  
Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main—  
A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

## ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER

Come hither, all sweet maidens soberly,  
Down-looking aye, and with a chastened light  
Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,  
And meekly let your fair hands joined be,  
As if so gentle that ye could not sec,  
Untouched, a victim of your beauty bright,  
Sinking away to his young spirit's night,  
Sinking bewildered 'mid the dreary sea:  
'Tis young Leander toiling to his death;  
Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips  
For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her smile.  
O horrid dream! see how his body dips,  
Dead-heavy; arms and shoulders gleam awhile:  
He's gone; up bubbles all his amorous breath!

## ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around  
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell  
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell  
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.  
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found  
That scarcely will the very smallest shell  
Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell,  
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.  
Oh, ye, who have your eye-balls vexed and tired,  
Feast them upon the wideness of the sea;  
O, ye, whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,  
Or fed too much with cloying melody,—  
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood  
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

ON SITTING DOWN TO READ KING  
LEAR ONCE AGAIN

O Golden-tongued Romance, with serene lute!  
Fair plumed Siren, Queen of far-away!  
Leave melodizing on this wintry day,  
Shut up thine olden volume, and be mute:  
Adieu! for, once again, the fierce dispute  
Betwixt damnation and impassioned clay  
Must I burn through; once more humbly essay  
The bitter-sweet of this Shakespearian fruit:  
Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,  
Begetters of our deep eternal theme!  
When through the old oak forest I am gone,  
Let me not wander in a barren dream,  
But, when I am consumed in the fire,  
Give me new Phoenix-wings to fly at my desire.

THE HUMAN SEASONS

Four seasons fill the measure of the year;  
There are four seasons in the mind of man:  
He has his lusty spring, when fancy clear  
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:  
He has his summer, when luxuriously  
Spring's honeyed cud of youthful thought he loves  
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high  
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves  
His soul has in its autumn, when his wings  
He furleth close; contented so to look  
On mists in idleness—to let fair things  
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.  
He has his winter too of pale misfeature,  
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

## WHEN I HAVE FEARS

When I have fears that I may cease to be  
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,  
Before high pilèd books, in charact'ry,  
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain;  
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,  
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
And think that I may never live to trace  
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;  
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!  
That I shall never look upon thee more,  
Never have relish in the facry power  
Of unreflecting love!—then on the shore  
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

## TO SLEEP

O soft embalmer of the still midnight!  
Shutting with careful fingers and benign  
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embowered from the light,  
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;  
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,  
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,  
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws  
Around my bed its lulling charitics;  
Then save me, or the passèd day will shine  
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;  
Save me from curious conscience, that still lords  
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;  
Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards  
And seal the hushèd casket of my soul.

## THE DAY IS GONE

The day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!  
Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,  
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,  
Bright eyes, accomplished shape, and langorous waist!  
Faded the flower and all its budded charms,  
Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,  
Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,  
Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—  
Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,  
When the dusk holiday—or holineight  
Of fragrant-curtained love begins to weave  
The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight;  
But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,  
He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

## BRIGHT STAR!

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—  
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like Nature's patient sleepless Friar,  
The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—  
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
To feel forever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake forever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

## FRIENDSHIP

When we were idlers with the loitering rills,  
The need of human love we little noted:  
Our love was Nature; and the peace that floated  
On the white mist, and dwelt upon the hills,  
To sweet accord subdued our wayward wills:  
One soul was ours, one mind, one heart devoted  
That wisely doting asked not why it doted,  
And ours the unknown joy, which knowing kills.  
But now I find how dear thou wert to me;  
That man is more than half of Nature's treasure,  
Of that fair beauty which no eye can see,  
Of that sweet music which no ear can measure;  
And now the streams may sing for others' pleasure,  
The hills sleep on in their eternity.

*Hartley Coleridge (1796-1849)*

## DEATH

It is not death that sometime in a sigh  
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;  
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply  
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;  
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,  
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;  
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal spirit  
Be lapp'd in alien clay and laid below;  
It is not death to know this—but to know  
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves  
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go  
So duly and so oft—and when grass waves  
Over the passed away, there may be then  
No resurrection in the minds of men.

*Thomas Hood (1798-1845)*

SILENCE

There is a silence where hath been no sound,  
There is a silence where no sound may be,  
In the cold grave—under the deep, deep sea,  
Or in wide desert where no life is found,  
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;  
No voice is hushed—no life tread silently,  
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,  
That never spoke, over the idle ground:  
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls  
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,  
Though the dun fox or wild hyena calls,  
And owls, that flit continually between,  
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan—  
There the true silence is, self-conscious and alone.

*Thomas Hood*

I THOUGHT ONCE HOW THEOCRITUS  
HAD SUNG

I thought once how Theocritus had sung  
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished for years,  
Who each one in a gracious hand appears  
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young;  
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,  
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,  
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years, . . .  
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung  
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,  
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move  
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;  
And a voice said in mastery while I strove, . . .  
"Guess now who holds thee?"—"Death!" I said. But there,  
The silver answer rang . . . "Not Death, but Love."

*Elizabeth B. Browning (1806-1861)*

## CHAUCER

An old man in a lodge within a park;  
The chamber walls depicted all around  
With portraitures of huntsman, hawk, and hound,  
And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,  
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark  
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;  
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,  
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.  
He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote  
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age  
Made beautiful with song; and as I read  
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note  
Of lark and linnet, and from every page  
Rise odors of plowed field or flowery mead.

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1883)*

## MILTON

I pace the sounding sea-beach and behold  
How the voluminous billows roll and run,  
Upheaving and subsiding, while the sun  
Shines through their sheeted emerald far unrolled  
And the ninth wave, slow gathering fold on fold  
All its loose-flowing garments into one,  
Plunges upon the shore, and floods the dun  
Pale reach of sands, and changes them to gold.  
So in majestic cadence rise and fall  
The mighty undulations of thy song,  
O sightless bard, England's Maecianides!  
And ever and anon, high over all  
Uplifted, a ninth wave superb and strong,  
Floods all the soul with its melodious seas.

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

## TO SCIENCE

(1829)

Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art!  
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.  
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,  
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?  
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,  
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering  
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,  
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?  
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?  
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood  
To seek a shelter in some happier star?  
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,  
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me  
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

*Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1849)*

## UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

Under the mountain, as when first I knew  
Its low black roof, and chimney creeper-twined,  
The red house stands; and yet my footsteps find,  
Vague in the walks, waste balm and feverfew.  
But they are gone: no soft-eyed sisters trip  
Across the porch or lintels, where, behind,  
The mother sat,—sat knitting with pursed lip.  
The house stands vacant in its green recess,  
Absent of beauty as a broken heart;  
The wild rain enters; and the sunset wind  
Sighs in the chambers of their loveliness,  
Or shakes the pane; and in the silent noons  
The glass falls from the window, part by part,  
And ringeth faintly in the grassy stones.

*Frederick Goddard Tuckerman (1821-1873)*

## TO AN INDEPENDENT PREACHER

*Who Preached That We Should Be  
"In Harmony With Nature"*

"In harmony with Nature?" Restless fool,  
Who with such heat dost preach what were to thee,  
When true, the last impossibility—  
To be like Nature strong, like Nature cool!  
Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but more,  
And in that *more* lies all his hopes of good.  
Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood;  
Nature is stubborn, man would fain adore;  
Nature is fickle, man hath need of rest;  
Nature forgives no debt, and fears no grave;  
Man would be mild, and with safe conscience blest.  
Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends;  
Nature and man can never be fast friends.  
Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest her slave!

*Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)*

## WEST LONDON

Crouched on the pavement, close by Belgrave Square,  
A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied.  
A babe was in her arms, and at her side  
A girl; their clothes were rags, their feet were bare.  
Some laboring men, whose work lay somewhere there,  
Passed opposite; she touched her girl, who hied  
Across, and begged, and came back satisfied.  
The rich she had let pass with frozen stare.  
Thought I: "Above her state this spirit towers;  
She will not ask of aliens, but of friends,  
Of sharers in a common human fate.  
She turns from that cold succor, which attends  
The unknown little from the unknowing great,  
And points us to a better time than ours."

*Matthew Arnold*

## ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS

Not that the earth is changing, O my God!  
Nor that the seasons totter in their walk,—  
Not that the virulent ill of act and talk  
Seethes ever as a winepress ever trod,—  
Not therefore are we certain that the rod  
Weighs in thine hand to smite thy world; though **now**  
Beneath thine hand so many nations bow,  
So many kings:—not therefore, O my God!—  
But because Man is parcelled out in men  
To-day; because, for any wrongful blow,  
No man not stricken asks, “I would be told  
Why thou dost thus:” but his heart whispers **then**,  
“He is he, I am I.” by this we know  
That the earth falls asunder, being old.

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882)*

## NUPTIAL SLEEP

At length their long kiss severed, with sweet **smart**:  
And as the last slow sudden drops are shed  
From sparkling caves when all the storm has fled,  
So singly flagged the pulses of each heart.  
Their bosoms sundered, with the opening start  
Of married flowers to either side outspread  
From the knit stem; yet still their mouths, burnt **red**,  
Fawned on each other where they lay apart.  
Sleep sank them lower than the tide of dreams,  
And their dreams watched them sink, and slid **away**.  
Slowly their souls swam up again, through gleams  
Of watered light and dull drowned waifs of day;  
Till from some wonder of new woods and streams  
He woke, and wondered more: for there she lay.

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti*

## FROM SUNSET TO STAR RISE

Go from me, summer friends, and tarry not:  
I am no summer friend, but wintry cold,  
A silly sheep benighted from the fold,  
A sluggard with a thorn-choked garden plot.  
Take counsel, sever my lot from your lot,  
Dwell in your pleasant places, hoard your gold,  
Lest you with me should shiver on the wold,  
Athirst and hungering on a barren spot.  
For I have hedged me with a thorny hedge,  
I live alone, I look to die alone;  
Yet sometimes when a wind sighs through the sedge,  
Ghosts of my buried years and friends come back,  
My heart goes sighing after swallows flown  
On sometime summer's unreturning track.

*Christina Rossetti (1830-1882)*

## REMEMBER

Remember me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more, day by day,  
You tell me of our future that you planned:  
Only remember me; you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
Than that you should remember and be sad.

*Christina Rossetti*

## REST

O Earth, lie heavily upon her eyes;  
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;  
Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth  
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.  
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,  
Hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth  
Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;  
With stillness that is almost Paradise.  
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,  
Silence more musical than any song;  
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:  
Until the morning of Eternity  
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;  
And when she wakes she will not think it long.

*Christina Rossetti*

TREAD SOFTLY! ALL THE EARTH IS  
HOLY GROUND

Tread softly! all the earth is holy ground.  
It may be, could we look with seeing eyes,  
This spot we stand on is a Paradise  
Where dead have come to life and lost been found,  
Where faith has triumphed, martyrdom been crowned,  
Where fools have foiled the wisdom of the wise;  
From this same spot the dust of saints may rise,  
And the King's prisoners come to light unbound.  
O earth, earth, earth, hear thou thy Maker's Word:  
"Thy dead thou shalt give up, nor hide thy slain."—  
Some who went weeping forth shall come again  
Rejoicing from the east or from the west,  
As doves fly to their windows, love's own bird  
Contented and desirous to the nest.

*Christina Rossetti*

# WHY ARE YOUR SONGS ALL WILD AND BITTER SAD

“Why are your songs all wild and bitter sad  
 A funeral dirges with the orphans’ cries?  
 Each night since first the world was made hath had  
 A sequent day to laugh it down the skies.  
 Chant us a glee to make our hearts rejoice,  
 Or seal in silence this unmanly moan.”  
 My friend, I have no power to rule my voice—  
 A spirit lifts me where I lie alone,  
 And thrills me into song by its own laws;  
 That which I feel, but seldom known, indeed  
 Tempering the melody it could not cause.  
 The bleeding heart cannot forever bleed  
 Inwardly solely; on the wan lips, too,  
 Dark blood will bubble ghastly into view.

*James Thomson (1834-1882)*

# SUMMER DAWN

Pray but one prayer for me ’twixt thy closed lips,  
 Think but one thought of me up in the stars.  
 The summer night waneth, the morning light slips,  
 Faint and grey ’twixt the leaves of the aspen, betwixt  
     the cloud-bars,  
 That are patiently waiting there for the dawn:  
 Patient and colorless, though Heaven’s gold  
 Waits to float through them along with the sun.  
 Far out in the meadows, above the young corn,  
 The heavy elms wait, and restless and cold  
 The uneasy wind rises; the roses are dun;  
 Through the long twilight they pray for the dawn,  
 Round the lone house in the midst of the corn.  
 Speak but one word to me over the corn,  
 Over the tender, bowed locks of the corn.

*William Morris (1834-1896)*

## BEN JONSON

Broad-based, broad-fronted, bounteous, multiform,  
With many a valley impleached with ivy and vine,  
Wherein the springs of all the streams run wine,  
And many a crag full-faced against the storm,  
The mountain where thy Muse's feet made warm  
Those lawns that revelled with her dance divine  
Shines yet with fire as it was wont to shine  
From tossing torches round the dance a-swarm.  
Nor less, high-stationed on the grey grave heights,  
High-thoughted seers with heaven's heart-kindling lights  
Hold converse: and the herd of meaner things  
Knows or by fiery scourge or fiery shaft  
When wrath on thy broad brows has risen, and laughed,  
Darkening thy soul with shadow of thunderous wings.

*Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909)*

## TRANSFIGURATION

But half a man's days—and his days were nights.  
What hearts were ours who loved him, should we pray  
That nights would yield him back to darkling day,  
Sweet death that soothes, to life that spoils and smites?  
For now perchance life lovelier than the light's  
That shed no comfort on his weary way  
Shows him what none may dream to see or say  
Ere yet the soul may scale those topless heights  
Where death lies dead, and triumph. Haply there  
Already may his kindling eyesight find  
Faces of friends—no face than his more fair—  
And first among them found of all his kind  
Milton, with crowns of Eden on his hair,  
And eyes that meet a brother's now not blind.

*Algernon Charles Swinburne*

## HAP

If but some vengeful god would call to me  
From up the sky, and laugh: "Thou suffering thing,  
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,  
That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!"  
Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,  
Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;  
Half-cased in that a Powerfuller than I  
Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.

But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,  
And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?  
—Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,  
And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. . . .  
These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown  
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.

*Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Now at thy soft recalling voice I rise  
Where thought is lord o'er Time's complete estate,  
Like as a dove from out the gray sedge flies  
To tree-tops green where cooes his heavenly mate.  
From these clear coverts high and cool I see  
How every time with every time is knit,  
And each to all is mortised cunningly,  
And none is sole or whole, yet all are fit.  
Thus, if this Age but as a comma show  
'Twixt weightier clauses of large-worded years,  
My calmer soul scorns not the mark: I know  
This crooked point Time's complex sentence clears.  
Yet more I learn while, Friend! I sit by thee:  
Who sees all time, sees all eternity.

*Sidney Lanier (1842-1881)*

From PSALM OF THE WEST

*('Columbus stands in the night alone, and, passing grave,  
Yearns o'er the sea as tones o'er under-silence yearns.')*

My Dawn? my Dawn? How if it never break?  
How if this West by other Wests is pieced,  
And these by vacant Wests on Wests increased—  
One Pain of Space, with hollow ache on ache  
Throbbing and ceasing not for Christ's own sake?—  
Big perilous theorem, hard for king and priest:  
*Pursue the West but long enough, 'tis East!*  
Oh, if this watery world no turning take!  
Oh, if with all my logic, all my dreams,  
Provings of that which is by that which seems,  
Fears, hopes, chills, heats, hastes, patiences, droughts, **tears,**  
Wife-grievings, slights on love, embezzled years,  
Hates, treaties, scorns, upliftings, loss and gain,—  
This earth, no sphere, be all one sickning plane!

Or haply how if this contrarious West,  
That me by turns hath starved, by turns hath fed,  
Embraced, disgraced, beat back, solicited,  
Have no fixed heart of Law within his breast,  
Or with some different rhythm doth e'er contest  
Nature in the East? Why, 'tis but three weeks fled  
I saw my Judas needle shake his head  
And flout the Pole that, east, he Lord confessed!  
God! if this West should own some other Pole,  
And with his tangled ways perplex my soul  
Until the maze grow mortal, and I die  
Where distraught Nature clean hath gone astray,  
On earth some other wit than Time's at play,  
Some other God than mine above the sky!

*Sidney Lanier*

## THE CANDLE INDOORS

Some clear candle burns somewhere I come by.  
I muse at how its being puts blissful back  
With yellowy moisture mild night's blear-all black,  
Or to-fro tender trambeams truckle at the eye.  
By that window what task what fingers ply,  
I plod wondering, a-wanting, just for lack  
Of answer the eagerer a-wanting Jessy or Jack  
There God to aggrandise, God to glorify.—

Come you indoors, come home; your fading fire  
Mend first and vital candle in close heart's vault:  
You there are master, do your own desire;  
What hinders? Are you beam-blind, yet to a fault  
In a neighbor deft-handed? are you that liar  
And, cast by conscience out, spendsavor salt?  
*Gerard Manly Hopkins (1844-1899)*

## NO WORST, THERE IS NONE

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,  
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.  
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?  
Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?  
My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief  
Woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing—  
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked, 'No ling-  
ering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief.'  
O the mind, mind has mountains: cliffs of fall  
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap  
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small  
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,  
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all  
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.  
*Gerard Manly Hopkins*

## THE HEART

*(To my critic who objected to the phrase—'The heart's burning floors.')*

## I

The heart you hold too small and local thing  
Such spacious terms of edifice to bear.  
And yet, since Poesy first shook out her wing,  
The mighty Love has been impalaced there;  
That has she given him as his wide demesne,  
And for his sceptre ample empery;  
Against its door to knock has Beauty been  
Content; it has its purply canopy,  
A dais for the sovereign lady spread  
Of many a lover, who the heaven would think  
Too low an awning for her sacred head.  
The world, from star to sea, cast down its brink—  
Yet shall that chasm, till He Who these did build  
An awful Curtius make him, yawn unfilled.

## 2

O nothing in this corporal earth of man,  
That to the imminent heaven of his high soul  
Responds with color and with shadow, can  
Lack correlated greatness. If the scroll  
Where thoughts lie fast in spell of hieroglyph  
Be mighty through its mighty habitants;  
If God be in His Name; grave potency if  
The sounds unbind of hieratic chants;  
All's vast that vastness means. Nay, I affirm  
Nature is whole in her least things expressed,  
Nor know we with what scope God builds the worm.  
Our towns are copied fragments from our breast;  
And all man's Babylons strive but to impart  
The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart.

*Francis Thompson (1860-1907)*

## NON PAX—EXPECTATIO

Hush! 'tis the gap between two lightnings. Room  
 Is none for peace in this thou callest peace,  
 This breathing-while wherein the breathings cease.  
 The pulses sicken, hearkening through the gloom.  
 Afar the thunders of a coming doom  
 Ramp on the cowering winds. Lo! at the dread,  
 Thy heart's tomb yawns and renders up its dead,—  
 The hopes 'gainst hope embalmed in its womb.

Canst thou endure, if the pent flood o'erflows?  
 Who is estated heir to constancy?  
 Behold, I hardly know if I outlast  
 The minute underneath whose heel I lie;  
 Yet I endure, have stayed the minute passed,  
 Perchance may stay the next. Who knows, who knows?

*Francis Thompson*

## LEDA AND THE SWAN

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still  
 Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed  
 By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,  
 He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.  
 How can those terrified vague fingers push  
 The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?  
 And how can body, laid in that white rush,  
 But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?  
 A shudder in the loins engenders there  
 The broken wall, the burning roof and tower  
 And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,  
 So mastered by the brute blood of the air,  
 Did she put on his knowledge with his power  
 Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

*William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)*

## FIRELIGHT

Ten years together without yet a cloud,  
They seek each other's eyes at intervals  
Of gratefulness to firelight and four walls  
For love's obliteration of the crowd.  
Serenely and perennially endowed  
And bowered as few may be, their joy recalls  
No snake, no sword; and over them there falls  
The blessing of what neither says aloud.  
Wiser for silence, they were not so glad  
Were she to read the graven tale of lines  
On the wan face of one somewhere alone;  
Nor were they more content could he have had  
Her thoughts a moment since of one who shines  
Apart, and would be hers if he had known.

*Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935)*

## LIVE BLINDLY AND UPON THE HOUR

Live blindly and upon the hour. The Lord,  
Who was the Future, died full long ago.  
Knowledge which is the Past is folly. Go,  
Poor child, and be not to thyself abhorred.  
Around thine earth sun-winged winds do blow  
And planets roll; a meteor draws his sword;  
The rainbow breaks his seven-colored chord  
And the long strips of river-silver flow:  
Awake! Give thyself to the lovely hours.  
Drinking their lips, catch thou the dream in flight  
About their fragile hairs' aerial gold.  
Thou art divine, thou livest,—as of old  
Apollo springing naked to the light,  
And all his island shivered into flowers.

*Trumbull Stickney (1874-1904)*

## MOWING

There was never a sound beside the wood but one,  
And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.  
What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself;  
Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,  
Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound—  
And that was why it whispered and did not speak.  
It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,  
Or easy gold at the hand of fay or elf:  
Anything more than the truth would have seemed too  
weak

To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows,  
Not without feeble-pointed spikes of flowers  
(Pale orchises), and scared a bright green snake.  
The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.  
My long scythe whispered and left the hay to rake.

*Robert Frost (b. 1875)*

I NEVER SEE THE RED ROSE CROWN THE  
YEAR

I never see the red rose crown the year,  
Nor feel the young grass underneath my tread,  
Without the thought, "This living beauty here  
Is earth's remembrance of a beauty dead.  
Surely where all this glory is displayed  
Love has been quick, like fire, to high ends,  
Here, in this grass, an altar has been made  
For some white joy, some sacrifice of friends;  
Here, where I stand, some leap of human brains  
Has touched immortal things and left its trace,  
The earth is happy here, the gleam remains;  
Beauty is here, the spirit of the place;

I touch the faith which nothing can destroy,  
The earth, the living church of ancient joy."

*John Masefield (b. 1878)*

WHEN I PERCEIVE THE SABLE OF YOUR  
HAIR

When I perceive the sable of your hair  
Silvered, and deep within those caverns are  
Your eyesockets, a double-imaged star,  
And your fine substance fretted down by care,  
Then do I marvel that a woman dare  
Prattle of mortal matters near and far  
To one so wounded in demonic war  
Against some prince of Sirius or Altair.

How is it possible that this hand of clay,  
Though white as porcelain, can contrive a touch  
So delicate it shall not hurt too much?  
What voice can my invention find to say  
So soft, precise, and scrupulous a word  
You shall not take it for another sword?

*Elinor Wylie (1885-1928)*

TO HIS FATHER

Christ was your lord and captain all your life,  
He fails the world but you he did not fail,  
He led you through all forms of grief and strife  
Intact, a man full-armed, he let prevail  
Nor outward malice nor the worse-fanged snake  
That coils in one's own brain against your calm,  
That great rich jewel well guarded for his sake  
With coronal age and death like quieting balm.  
I Father having followed other guides  
And oftener to my hurt no leader at all,  
Through years nailed up like dripping panther hides  
For trophies on a savage temple wall  
Hardly anticipate that reverend stage  
Of life, the snow-wreathed honor of extreme age.

*Robinson Jeffers (b. 1887)*

### THE TALL GIRL

The Queens of Hell had lissome necks to crane  
 At the tall girl approaching with long tread  
 And, when she was caught up even with them, nodded:  
 "If the young miss with gold hair might not disdain,  
 We would esteem her company over the plain,  
 To profit us where the dogs will be out barking;  
 And we'll walk by the windows where the young men  
     are working  
 And tomorrow we will all come home again."

But the Queen of Heaven on the other side of the road  
 In the likeness, I hear, of a fine motherly woman  
 Made a wry face, despite it was so common  
 To be worsted by the smooth ladies of hell,  
 And crisped her sweet tongue: "This will never come to  
     good!  
 Just an old woman, my pet, that wishes you well."  
*John Crowe Ransom (b. 1888)*

### THE END OF THE WORLD

Quite unexpectedly as Vasserot  
 The armless ambidextrian was lighting  
 A match between his great and second toe  
 And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting  
 The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum  
 Pointed, and Terry was about to cough  
 In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb—  
 Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there, hung over  
 Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,  
 There in the starless dark, the poise, the hover,  
 There with vast wings across the canceled skies,  
 There in the sudden blackness the black pall  
 Of nothing, nothing, nothing—nothing at all.

*Archibald MacLeish (b. 1891)*

WHAT LIPS MY LIPS HAVE KISSED

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,  
I have forgotten, and what arms have lain  
Under my head till morning; but the rain  
Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh  
Upon my glass and listen for reply,  
And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain  
For unremembered lads that not again  
Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.  
Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,  
Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,  
Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:  
I cannot say what loves have come and gone,  
I only know that summer sang in me  
A little while, that in me sings no more.

*Edna St. Vincent Millay (b. 1892)*

THE END

After the blast of lightning from the East,  
The flourish of loud clouds, the Chariot Throne;  
After the drums of time have rolled and ceased,  
And, from the bronze west, long retreat is blown—

Shall Life renew these bodies? Of a truth  
All death will he annul, all tears assuage?—  
Or fill these void veins full again with youth,  
And wash, with an immortal water, Age?

When I do ask white Age, he saith, 'Not so:  
My head hangs weighed with snow.'  
And when I hearken to the Earth, she saith:  
'My fiery heart sinks aching. It is death.  
Mine ancient scars shall not be glorified,  
Nor my titanic tears, the seas, be dried.'

*Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)*

## PITY THIS BUSY MONSTER

pity this busy monster, manunkind,  
 not. Progress is a comfortable disease:  
 your victim (death and life safely beyond)  
 plays with the bigness of his littleness  
 —electrons deify one razorblade  
 into a mountain range; lenses extend  
 unwish through curving wherewhen till unwish  
 returns on its unself.

A world of made  
 is not a world of born—pity poor flesh  
 and trees, poor stars and stones, but never this  
 fine specimen of hypermagical  
 ultraomnipotence. We doctors know  
 a hopeless case if—listen: there's a hell  
 of a good universe next door; let's go

*E. E. Cummings (b. 1894)*

## TO SHAKESPEARE

Through torrid entrances, past icy poles  
 A hand moves on the page! Who shall again  
 Engrave such hazards as thy might controls—  
 Conflicting, purposeful yet outcry vain  
 Of all our days, being pilot,—tempest, too!  
 Sheets that mock lust and thorns that scribble hate  
 Are lifted from torn flesh with human rue,  
 And laughter, burnished brighter than our fate,  
 Thou wieldest with such tears that every faction  
 Swears high in Hamlet's throat, and devils throng  
 Where angels beg for doom in ghast distraction  
 And fall, both! Yet thine Ariel holds his song:  
 And that serenity that Prospero gains  
 Is justice that has cancelled earthly chains.

*Hart Crane (1899-1932)*

### AGAIN THE NATIVE HOUR LETS DOWN THE LOCKS

Again the native hour lets down the locks  
Uncombed and black, but gray the bobbing beara;  
Ten years ago His eyes, fierce shuttlecocks,  
Pierced the close net of what I failed: I feared  
The belly-cold, the grave-clout, that betrayed  
Me slithering in the rift of cordial seas;  
Ten years is time enough to be dismayed  
By mummy Christ, head crammed between his knees.

Suppose I take an arrogant bomber, stroke  
By stroke, up to the frazzled sun to hear  
Sun-ghostlings whisper: Yes, the capital yoke—  
Remove it and there's not a ghost to fear  
This crucial day, whose decapitate joke  
Languidly winds into the inner ear.

*Allen Tate (b. 1899)*

### THE WOODEN HORSE OF MYTH

The wooden horse of myth stands on the air  
arching a traitorous neck on roofed mankind;  
the clocks are eyes and wide with mock despair  
hunting in sanguine skylines of the mind:  
and cherubs' faces fluttering in position,  
dolls tethered by the nerves behind the curtain  
and soldiers draped about the foiled ignition  
portend an end momentarily uncertain.

Meanwhile the white-haired meadows of the sea  
sing in the fixtures of the music box:  
the crowning glory of the verb to be  
marches its fields of fire among the rocks—  
while tides of flowers topple from the blood  
and horseless hills affirm their mountainhood.

*Oscar Williams (b. 1900)*

## FIRST WARM DAYS

April, up on a twig a leaf tuft stands  
And heaven lifts a hundred miles mildly  
Comes and fondles our faces, playing friends—  
Such a one day often concludes coldly—  
Then in dark coats in the bare afternoon view  
Idle people—we few who that day are—  
Stroll in the park aimless and stroll by twos  
Easy in the weather of our home star.  
And human faces—hardly changed after  
Millenia—the separate single face  
Placid, it turns toward friendly laughing  
Or makes an iridescence, being at peace.  
We all are pleased by an air like of loving  
Going home quiet in the subway-shoving  
*Edwin Denby*

## NEARING AGAIN THE LEGENDARY ISLE

Nearing again the legendary isle  
Where sirens sang and mariners were skinned,  
We wonder now what was there to beguile  
That such stout fellows left their bones behind.  
Those chorus girls are surely past their prime,  
Voices grow shrill and paint is wearing thin,  
Lips that sealed up the sense from gnawing time  
Now beg the favor with a graveyard grin.  
We have no flesh to spare and they can't bite,  
Hunger and sweat have stripped us to the bone;  
A skeleton crew we toil upon the tide  
And mock the theme-song meant to lure us on:  
No need to stop the cars, avert the eyes  
From purple rhetoric of evening skies.  
*C. Day-Lewis (b. 1904)*

"THE JEW WRECKED IN THE GERMAN CELL"

How he survived them they could never understand:  
Had they not beggared him themselves to prove  
They could not live without their dogmas or their land?  
No worlds they drove him from were ever big enough:  
How *could* it be the earth the Unconfined  
Meant when It bade them set no limits to their love?  
And he fulfilled the rôle for which he was designed:  
On heat with fear, he drew their terrors to him,  
And was a godsend to the lowest of mankind.  
Till there was no place left where they could still pursue  
him  
Except the exile which he called his Race.  
But, envying him even that, they plunged right through  
him  
Into a land of mirrors without time or space,  
And all they had to strike now was the human face.  
*W. H. Auden (b. 1907)*

WITHOUT THAT ONCE CLEAR AIM

Without that once clear aim, the path of flight  
To follow for a life-time through white air,  
This century chokes me under roots of night  
I suffer like history in Dark Ages, where  
Truth lies in dungeons, from which drifts no whisper;  
We hear of towers long broken off from sight  
And tortures and war, in dark and smoky rumor,  
But on men's buried lives there falls no light.  
Watch me who walk through coiling streets were rain  
And fog drown every cry: at corners of day  
Road drills explore new areas of pain,  
Nor summer nor light may reach down here to play.  
The city builds its horror in my brain,  
This writing is my only wings away.  
*Stephen Spender (b. 1909)*

## BIRD, BIRD

Age after age our bird through incense flies,  
Angel or daw, dove, phoenix, falcon or roc,  
Till this last net of wings dark charged to wreck  
The hoops of heaven, dove's arc, and all that cries.  
The clotted frets of Daedalus unlock  
An egg of paradox the gods disguise;  
Men as the organs of the bird demise  
Heaven's breath under the bombers' moon, flac-flac.

Plunge, boy, to paradise that in heart's choir  
Is home, rocked on the cords of birth, low  
Again home, bringing to earth your found fire  
Be hound or vine, not entrail to the crow  
Of metal death,—explode the skies of fear—  
Come down, O Icarus, come down, down, O.

*Gene Derwood*

## SONNET TO MY MOTHER

Most near, most dear, most loved and most far,  
Under the window where I often found her  
Sitting as huge as Asia, seismic with laughter,  
Gin and chicken helpless in her Irish hand,  
Irresistible as Rabelais but most tender for  
The lame dogs and hurt birds that surround her,—  
She is a procession no one can follow after  
But be like a little dog following a brass band.

She will not glance up at the bomber or condescend  
To drop her gin and scuttle to a cellar,  
But lean on the mahogany table like a mountain  
Whom only faith can move, and so I send  
O all my faith and all my love to tell her  
That she will move from mourning into morning.

*George Barker (b. 1913)*

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